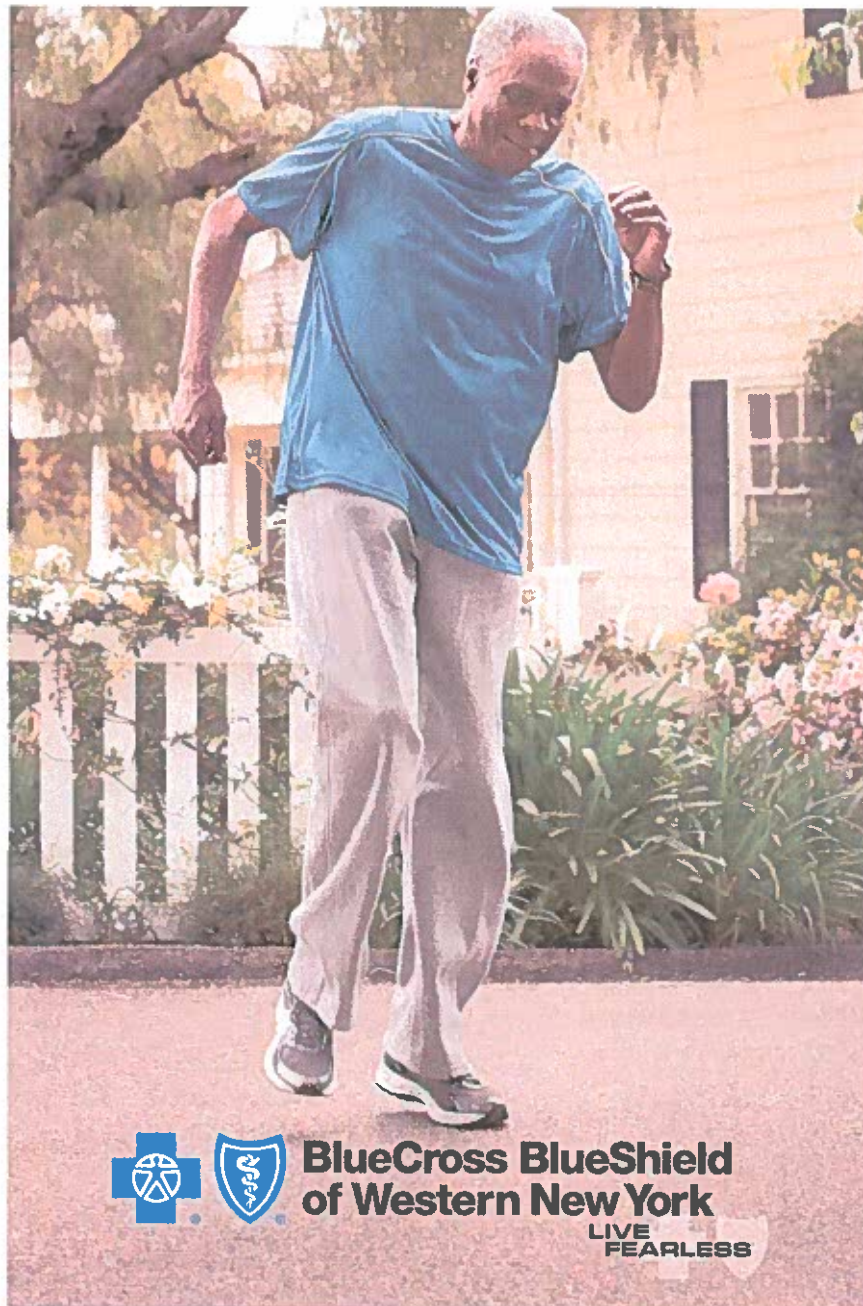


# Fall Prevention Exercises



**BlueCross BlueShield  
of Western New York**

**LIVE  
FEARLESS**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in every three adults age 65 and older will fall each year. Falls are a leading cause of hospitalization and loss of independence for older adults.

Getting regular exercise is one of the most effective ways to reduce your risk of falling. Exercises that improve your balance and coordination are the most helpful. Check with your doctor before beginning any new exercise program.

Stay safe while exercising by standing near your kitchen sink and keeping a chair nearby to rest, if necessary.

Hold on to the edge of the sink as needed for safety. Stand facing the sink with your eyes open and your feet a comfortable distance apart, pointing straight forward. Repeat each of the following strengthening exercises four times. Gradually increase to 8-12 repetitions as your strength and endurance improve.

## fall prevention exercise examples

**Half Squats** — Slowly bend your knees slightly, then straighten. Keep your feet flat on the floor. If you have knee pain, avoid doing this exercise, or bend more shallowly.

**Heel Lifts** — Slowly rise up to your tiptoes, and then lower your heels back to the floor.

**Toe Lifts** — Keeping your heels on the floor, lift your toes off the floor. Hold them up for a count of three; then lower them back to the floor. (Don't allow your hips to go backward when you do this exercise: keep them as straight as possible.)

**Side Leg Lifts** — Slowly lift one leg out to the side, then return it to the center. Keep your knee straight and your toes pointing forward. Lead with the side of your foot, not your toe. Repeat with each leg.

**Back Leg Lifts** — Slowly lift one leg to the back, then return it to the starting position. Tighten your abdominal muscles so the lower back does not arch. Repeat with each leg.

**Side Step Together** — Begin with your feet together. Step to the side with the right foot, then bring the left foot next to the right foot. Step to the side with the left foot, then bring the right foot next to the left.

**Side Step Lunge** — Begin with your feet together. Step to the side with the right foot, bend the right knee as if lunging, straighten the right knee, and bring the right foot back to the center. Repeat to the left side.

**Standing Feet Together** — Stand with good posture, feet together. Try to maintain balance for a count of 10. Use the edge of the sink only as much as you need to for balance. A small amount of sway is normal. Notice the muscles around your ankles and in your feet working. You'll also notice pressure changes in your feet as you stand still. Gradually increase your time until you can stand still for 30 seconds. Then, advance to the next exercise.

**Standing with One Foot a Half Step Ahead** — Place the ball of one foot beside the instep of the other foot. Try to maintain balance with your feet in this position for a count of 10. Repeat with the other foot in front. Gradually increase your time until you can stand still for 30 seconds with your feet in each position. Then, advance to the next exercise. Modification: If this exercise is too difficult, place feet wider apart.

**Heel-to-Toe Standing** — Place the heel of one foot directly in front of the toe of the other foot as if on a balance beam. Try to maintain balance for a count of 10 with your feet in this position. Perform the exercise with the other foot in front. Gradually increase your time until you can stand still for 30 seconds with your feet in each position. Modification: If this exercise is too difficult, place feet wider apart.

**High Step Marching** — March alternately (R L R L) lifting the feet only slightly off the floor to begin. As your balance improves, gradually raise your knees higher. Slow marching challenges your balance more than fast marching. Modification: It may work better to turn your side toward the sink and hold onto the sink with one hand.



**BlueCross BlueShield**  
of Western New York

[bcbswny.com](http://bcbswny.com)

BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York is a Medicare Advantage plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York depends on contract renewal. A division of HealthNow New York Inc., an independent licensee of the BlueCross BlueShield Association.

6807\_WNY\_01\_14