



How to Build Balance and Keep Ankles Steady

Our ankles play vital roles in keeping us upright and in balance. However, injuries and general wear and tear over time can lead to weakness and instability in the ankles, increasing the risk of falls and further injuries.

Building your ankle strength is a good investment in a steadier future. The following exercises are tailored toward doing just that, as well as honing your sense of body placement. We must stress that you speak with us or another professional before starting a steady program, however—especially if you already have weak ankles or are recovering from a sprain or other ankle injury.

- **Alternating Toe-Heel** – Sit in a chair that lets your foot hang comfortably about 2 inches off the ground (books or pillows can help add some extra height). Tap your heel and then your toe against the ground, starting at a slow pace and building up to a fast but controlled rhythm. Three sets of 50 reps each is often recommended.
- **Side-to-side** – Sitting in the same position as the above exercise, now move side to side. Touch the outside edge of your foot on the ground and then your foot's inside edge. Both touches equals one rep. Start slow and build again for three sets of 50 reps.
- **Single Leg Balance** – This one's easy, at least in concept: stand on one leg for 30 seconds, without support unless you absolutely need it. Repeat six times with each leg, starting with eyes open, then moving to eyes closed once confident.



Does My Hammertoe Need Treatment?

A hammertoe, unfortunately, is not something that will go away on its own. This toe deformity often arises due to an imbalance of muscles and ligaments around the toe joints, leading to the toes resting in their bent positions.

But does having a hammertoe necessarily mean something must be done about it? Well, in most cases, the answer is yes; it's the range of what needs to be done that can vary.

Treatment for hammertoes falls into two general categories: management and correction. If a hammertoe is in an early stage and causing only mild-to-moderate discomfort, the goals may likely lean more toward managing the condition. Treatments may include a change in shoes, the use of custom-orthotics, and/or exercises and medication to reduce pain and swelling. This can increase comfort while helping the hammertoe from worsening.

Sometimes, however, conservative treatments don't work. In these cases, and in cases where the deformity is severe, pain is intense, or there are risks for wounds and infection, surgery is more likely to be considered as an option.

Even if your hammertoe is not causing you any detectable problems at the moment, it is always best to talk to your podiatrist about it. Managing the condition early on is much easier than waiting until more advanced measures are needed.

Mark Your Calendars

- April 2** National Peanut Butter and Jelly Day – It doesn't have to be a sandwich, you know.
- April 10** National Siblings Day – Celebrate your kin, whether genetic or not!
- April 12** National Big Wind Day – Highest recorded wind on this day in 1934: 231 mph!
- April 14** National Reach as High As You Can Day – A good time for some calf stretches.
- April 17** National Bat Appreciation Day – They eat insects and go "Skeek!"
- April 21** National Auctioneers Day – Or at least that's what we think they said.
- April 25** National Telephone Day – Whether it's in your pocket or on your wall!
- April 30** National Bugs Bunny Day – Ask our doc what's up.



What Happens to Your Body When You Become Inactive?

Exercise is an important part of staying healthy, especially when it comes to consistency. Even the effects of the most intense workout programs (which you should NOT try without proper conditioning, by the way) will start to fade if choice or circumstances render you inactive.

The benefits of exercise are not permanent. Here's what can happen:

- **Endurance Falls** – Exercise builds up the amount of oxygen your body can use, and its efficiency in using it. Within 2 weeks of inactivity, this ability can decrease by about 10%, and continue to fall over time. You'll feel this in the way you get more winded after bouts of motion.
- **Blood Glucose Rises** – Two weeks can also be enough to raise your blood glucose levels by half the amount they had lowered to through exercise; a concern for anyone who is at risk for diabetes.
- **Gaining Fat** – Of course, you might have expected this one. A noticeable physical change may be evident in body shape after about 6 weeks for some people. It doesn't matter if you're elite, either!

Of course, sometimes life doesn't allow you to stick to the routines you love. If an injury has sidelined you, consult with us for help determining a roster of ways to stay active without hindering your recovery. You might be surprised how effective some cross-training or more low-impact activities can be!



RECIPE: Meatless “Chicken Salad” Lettuce Wraps

Looking for a new recipe for Meatless Monday (or any day you choose)? Try this recipe for vegetarian “chicken” salad lettuce wraps that substitutes garbanzo beans for poultry.

Servings: 1

Ingredients

- ½ cup garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
- ¼ cup walnuts
- 1 diced rib of celery
- 2 tbsp. raisins, dried cranberries, or dried cherries
- ¼ cup Greek yogurt, plain
- 4 romaine lettuce leaves
- Low sodium seasoned salt

Preparation

- Chop the garbanzo beans and walnuts coarsely into a mixture
- Add the celery, dried fruit, yogurt, and a dash of seasoned salt
- Serve in the romaine lettuce leaves





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Why Take Care of Fungal Nails Now?

We know it's easy to put off thinking about a fungal nail infection. It's even easier if you've kept your feet in shoes or boots the past several months and adopted an "out of sight, out of mind" mentality. The truth, however, is that those unsightly nails are still there, and will remain there until something is done about them.

If you're thinking about treatment for your fungal toenails, then NOW is a perfect time to seek out advice!

There is the general principal that the sooner treatment begins on fungal toenails, the more likely and quickly one may see success. But even if you've had fungal nails for years, beginning treatment in the spring can help ensure clearer nails once summer rolls around and sandals become more the norm.

Even when a fungal toenail treatment successfully eradicates all the nasty fungus causing the problem, it still takes several month for the damaged nail to grow out and clean, healthy nail tissue to grow in. Keep that in mind if you have any events coming up where you might want to show off your toes. Sooner is better!

If you are considering fungal nail treatment, please let us know. We can discuss your best options for fighting that fungus!

