

The Four-Stage Balance Test is a simple, 10-second, four-position test used to evaluate static balance and fall risk. It is designed to be performed safely at home near a sturdy support, such as a kitchen countertop or heavy chair.

Safety Preparation:

- Support: Stand next to a sturdy, immovable object, such as a kitchen counter, wall, or heavy chair.
- Environment: Ensure the floor is level and non-slippery.
- Assistance: If you are at high risk of falling, have someone stand by to help.
- Goal: Try to hold each position for 10 seconds without holding onto the support.

How to Perform the Test:

1. Stand near the countertop and assume the position for Stage 1.
2. Once steady, let go of the counter and start a 10-second timer.
3. You may move your arms or torso to keep your balance, but do not move your feet.
4. If you can hold the position for 10 seconds, move to Stage 2.
5. If you cannot hold a position for 10 seconds, STOP the test.

Understanding Your Results:

- Pass: Being able to hold the third position (Full Tandem Stance) for 10 seconds indicates a lower risk of falling.
- At Risk: Difficulty completing any of the first three stages indicates a higher risk of falling and may warrant balance training or medical advice (cane or walker).
- Note: If you are unable to complete a stage, note which side was more difficult and mention it to your healthcare provider.

The Four Stages (10 Seconds Each):

You must pass one stage (hold for 10 seconds without moving your feet or grabbing the counter) to move to the next.

Stage 1: Feet Side-by-Side

Stand with your feet together, side-by-side, touching.

A



Stage 2: Semi-Tandem Stance

Place the instep (inner arch) of one foot so it is touching the big toe of the other foot.

B



Stage 3: Full Tandem Stance

Place one foot directly in front of the other, heel-to-toe, as if standing on a tightrope.

C



Stage 4: Single-Leg Stance Stand on one foot, lifting the other foot off the ground.

AgeSmart Fitness

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This balance screening is for informational purposes only and is not a medical evaluation or diagnosis. Please perform all movements in a safe environment and stop immediately if you feel pain, dizziness, or unsteadiness. Consult your healthcare provider before beginning any new exercise or balance program, especially if you have a medical condition or concerns about falling.