

The Flamingo Test: Why You Should Stand on One Leg

Summary

Balance is a "use it or lose it" skill that declines rapidly after age 50, leading to a higher risk of dangerous falls. The "Flamingo Test"—standing on one leg—is a quick way to gauge your stability and brain health. Practicing this simple move while brushing your teeth can strengthen your deep core, stabilizing muscles, and neural pathways.

How long can you stand on one leg? It sounds like a playground game, but it's actually a serious clinical test for longevity.

The inability to stand on one leg for 10 seconds in middle age is linked to a higher risk of all-cause mortality. Why? Because balance isn't just about ankles; it requires complex coordination between your eyes, inner ear (vestibular system), and brain.

The Silent Decline

We take balance for granted until we lose it.

- **The risk:** Falls are the leading cause of injury-related death in older adults.
- **The cause:** As we age, our reaction times slow, and our "stabilizer" muscles (in the hips and core) weaken from lack of use.

Train Your Stability

You don't need a balance board. You just need to brush your teeth.

- **The Toothbrush Habit:** Every morning and night, stand on your left leg while brushing the top teeth, and your right leg while brushing the bottom.
- **Make it Harder:** Once that's easy, try closing your eyes. Removing visual input forces your body to rely entirely on its internal sensors (proprioception). It's a massive workout for your brain and ankles.
- **Engage the Core:** You'll notice your stomach muscles tightening to keep you upright. That's "stealth" core training.

Be a flamingo for two minutes a day. It's the easiest insurance policy against falls you can buy.

Sources Cited:

- British Journal of Sports Medicine. (2022). *Successful 10-second one-legged stance performance predicts survival.*

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- NHS. (n.d.). *Balance exercises.*