

# 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.

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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.

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## 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.*