

STAY BALANCED

- feeling physically in and off balancee

The aim of the 'Stay Balanced' exercise is to introduce the theme of the balancing person in a physical way. Participants try balancing their own bodies, first with eyes open and then closed. The educator tells them that life with chronic illness is also easier if tackled with eyes open, as it were. She talks about walking on a balance beam and are being supported with a little finger or a hand grip or pushed over the beam. She will talk about how you can lose your balance and find it again. The exercise gives participants a sense of what happens when the body is off balance and what happens when you find your balance again.

If individual participants have difficulties in doing the exercise, they can naturally support themselves against the table or chair or skip the exercise entirely.



At least 5 minutes



Good floor space, possibly with access to support



Individual
Group



Link to The Balancing Person

STEP BY STEP

1. The educator introduces the aim of the exercise: To be aware of a new sense of balance.
2. The educator asks participants to stand.
3. The educator first demonstrates the exercise by standing on one leg with eyes open.
4. Participants then have to stand on one leg and balance with eyes open for 10-20 secs.
5. They then close their eyes while continuing to balance on one leg for 10-20 secs. If the exercise is too difficult, participants can stand on two legs but with one foot ahead of the other. The exercise can be varied in different ways.
6. The educator encourages participants to say briefly whether they feel in or off balance.
7. The educator may conclude the exercise by saying something about how many people with chronic illness lose their balance. She can say that now they have tried to feel what that means purely physically. She can also remark that by extension, it is a matter of finding and keeping your balance and that it is more difficult with eyes closed than open. Practice makes perfect - and most people need a helping hand to maintain their balance.