

LiFE – Lifestyle Functional Exercise program

LiFE a new approach – turning everyday activities into opportunities to improve your balance and strength and prevent falls

In the LiFE program you include activities which challenge your balance and strength into your everyday tasks and routines. Reaching for the toothpaste becomes an opportunity to strengthen your knees; cleaning your teeth becomes an opportunity to improve your balance. The possibilities are endless.

With LiFE you don't do the same set of exercises a few times each week. Instead you try to do as many of the LiFE activities in as many of your daily tasks as you can. You will always be looking for ways of doing just a bit more and challenging yourself.

The program consists of 15 activities. All of these can be integrated into your normal daily routine and tasks.



Key Points – The LiFE Exercise Program

- You will learn the balance and strength principles connected to LiFE and the activities that are linked with these.
- To improve your balance you need to practice activities that challenge your balance.
- To improve your strength you need to make your muscles work harder.
- The balance and strength activities will be embedded into everyday tasks that are part of your routine. This requires changing your habits.
- You will learn to look for opportunities to add balance and strength activities into your day.
- You will look for ways of doing more.

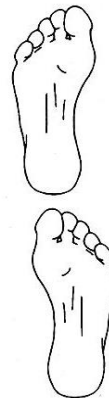
Following are 4 sample activities from the LiFE program

The LiFE program Participant and Trainer Manuals are currently being edited for publication. You can register your interest with an email to Sydney University Press (sup.info@sydney.edu.au).

Activity - Tandem stand (*Balance*)

Instructions:

- The heel of one foot is directly in front of the toe of the other
- Swap the foot that is in the front
- Use support from your hands as needed
- To be safe make sure that you have support readily available
- To make it more challenging use less support from your hands.



Correct foot
placement for
tandem stand

Ideas for including Tandem Stand into your daily activities

- At the kitchen bench while waiting for the kettle to boil
- At the bathroom sink while cleaning your teeth
- While on the telephone.

Write your own plan for putting a Tandem Stand into a daily activity.

e.g I tandem stand when I am waiting for the kettle to boil in the morning.

Activity - Bend your knees (*Strength*)

Instructions:

- Bend your knees instead of bending your back
- You don't have to do a full squat – partial squatting is good for building up strength.



Ideas for including Bend your Knees into your daily activities

- When you get your socks and underwear out of the drawer
- When you put things away in the kitchen cupboards.

TIP

Move everyday items so that you have to bend your knees to reach them.

As you get better at this activity you might move some regularly used items so that you have to bend your knees to get them. For example, putting the dishwashing liquid in the cupboard below the sink so when you wash up you remember to bend your knees.

Write your own plan for Bending Your Knees into a daily activity.

e.g I 'bend my knees' to get the clothes out of the washing basket.

Activity – One leg stand (*Balance*)

Instructions:

- Stand on one leg
- The position of the other leg can be varied
- Support can be from hands, finger tips, trunk or the other foot
- Support can vary depending on what you are doing
- Use support as needed from:
 - Hands,
 - Tummy or hips
 - Knees.



Ideas for including One Leg Stand into your daily activities

- While making your lunch
- While heating food in the microwave
- When you clean your teeth
- In the queue at the supermarket.

To be safe make sure that you have support readily available.
To make it more challenging use less support from your hands.

Write your own plan for Standing on One Leg into a daily activity.
e.g I stand on one leg while I brush my teeth in the morning.

Activity – Up the Stairs (Strength)

Instructions:

- Use your legs to lift you up the stairs rather than pulling up with your hands
- Decrease the amount of support that you use.



Firm support – holding on tightly to the rail



Light support – using less hand support on the hand rail



Going up steps using NO hand support

Ideas for including Up the Stairs into your daily activities

- Make more trips up steps you have at home
- Change where you walk to include walking up a flight of steps when you are doing your shopping.

Write your own plan for including 'Up the Stairs' into a daily activity.

e.g I will go up the stairs each time instead of leaving a pile of things at the bottom

Acknowledgement to:

Clemson, Munro & Fiatarone Singh (in press) LiFE Participant and Trainer Manuals, Sydney University Press

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