

## ASSESSMENT

# The 4-Stage Balance Test

**Purpose:** To assess static balance

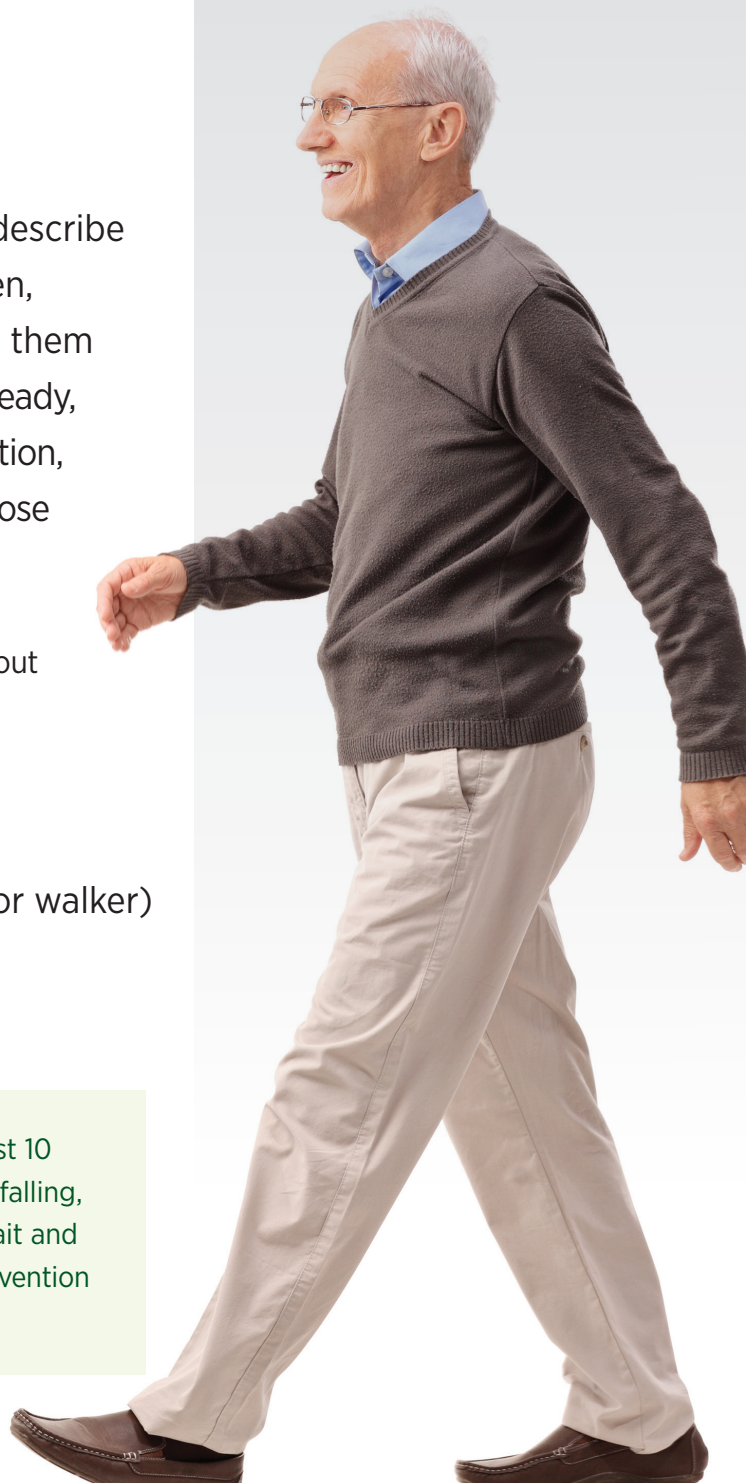
**Equipment:** A stopwatch

**Directions:** There are four standing positions that get progressively harder to maintain. You should describe and demonstrate each position to the patient. Then, stand next to the patient, hold their arm, and help them assume the correct position. When the patient is steady, let go, and time how long they can maintain the position, but remain ready to assist the patient if they should lose their balance.

- ▶ If the patient can hold a position for 10 seconds without moving their feet or needing support, go on to the next position.
- ▶ If not, **STOP** the test.

Patients should not use an assistive device (cane or walker) and they should keep their eyes open.

An older adult who cannot hold the tandem stand for at least 10 seconds is at increased risk of falling. To reduce their risk of falling, you might consider referring them to physical therapy for gait and balance exercises, or refer them to an evidence-based fall prevention program, such as Tai Chi.



ASSESSMENT CONTINUED

# The 4-Stage Balance Test





Patient \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_  AM  PM

## Instructions to the patient:

- ▶ I'm going to show you four positions.
- ▶ Try to stand in each position for 10 seconds.
- ▶ You can hold your arms out, or move your body to help keep your balance, but don't move your feet.
- ▶ For each position I will say, "Ready, begin." Then, I will start timing. After 10 seconds, I will say, "Stop."

	① Stand with your feet side-by-side.	Time: _____ seconds
	② Place the instep of one foot so it is touching the big toe of the other foot.	Time: _____ seconds
	③ Tandem stand: Place one foot in front of the other, heel touching toe.	Time: _____ seconds
	④ Stand on one foot.	Time: _____ seconds

## Notes:

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CDC's STEADI tools and resources can help you screen, assess, and intervene to reduce your patient's fall risk.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/steady](http://www.cdc.gov/steady)



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

**STEADI** Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths & Injuries