4-Stage Balance Test

Patient name:	Age:
Assessor:	Date of assessment:

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.

Instructions to 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."

Steps	Time
1. Stand with your feet side-by-side.	_____ seconds
2. Place the instep of one foot so it is touching the big toe of the other foot.	_____ seconds

3. Place one foot in front of the other, heel touching toe.	_____ seconds
4. Stand on one foot.	_____ seconds

Results

☐ The patient can maintain all four positions for 10 seconds without moving their feet or requiring support, indicating good static balance and a low risk of falling.

☐ The patient struggles with the semi-tandem stance (one foot slightly ahead of the other), which may indicate a moderate fall risk.

☐ The patient is unable to hold the tandem stance (heel-to-toe position) for 10 seconds, suggesting an increased risk of falling and the need for further balance assessment.

Notes

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2017). *The 4-Stage Balance Test*. https://www.cdc.gov/steadi/media/pdfs/STEADI-Assessment-4Stage-508.pdf

Phelan, E. A., Mahoney, J. E., Voit, J. C., & Stevens, J. A. (2015). Assessment and management of fall risk in primary care settings. *Medical Clinics of North America*, *99*(2), 281–293. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mcna.2014.11.004