Exercises That Can Help Seniors With Balance, Flexibility

Balance and flexibility can serve as the foundations of a physically healthy body. According to UCLA Health, better balance is essential for preventing falls and helps to ensure a strong, steady and well-balanced walking gait that helps individuals move faster, which studies have associated with longevity and reduced risk for diseases that can contribute to death. Flexibility is equally vital to physical health, as the Cleveland Clinic notes remaining flexible improves range of motion, helps with posture and reduces risk of injury.

Everyone has much to gain from improving balance and flexibility, but perhaps no group can reap greater rewards from such efforts than seniors, particularly those who aspire to age in place. According to a 2025 study published in the Journal of Elder Policy, mobility disability is the most frequently reported type of disability among older adults. And that National Institute on Aging reports that mobility issues that affect balance and gait increase the risk of falls among older adults, which in turn makes it harder for seniors to live independently.

Balance and flexibility are not the lone variable affecting seniors' ability to age in place. However, exercises that promote balance and flexibility can help to increase the amount of time seniors get to live in their homes. With that goal in mind, seniors can speak to their physicians and even work with a personal trainer to incorporate these balance and flexibility exercises into their fitness routines.

· Sit-to-stand exercise: Johns Hopkins Medicine notes this exercise is designed to build leg strength and improve body mechanics and balance.

· Balance exercise: This exercise recommended by Johns Hopkins can be done with feet apart or feet together. The exercise is designed to help people whose balance is unsteady, so Johns Hopkins recommends performing the exercises with someone present to serve as a safety net should you lose your balance.

· Sideways walking: The United Kingdom-based NHS notes that the sideways walking exercise can help to improve balance, but cautions that seniors should avoid dropping their hips as they step.

· Simple grapevine: The simple grapevine exercise begins by crossing the right foot over the left. Then bring the left foot to join it. This can be done on each side, and fingers can be placed on a wall to provide stability.

· Heel-to-heel walk: The NHS advises keeping the head looking forward at all times when performing this exercise. Fingers can be placed on a wall for stability.

· Overhead side stretch: SilverSneakers® notes this flexibility exercise involves standing tall with feet hip-width apart. Arms can then be raised overhead (with fingers interlaced, if preferable) as the torso is kept long. Gently lean to one side and hold for 10 to 30 seconds before returning to center and repeating on the other side.

· Shoulder stretch: This flexibility stretch also involves standing tall with feet hip-width apart. Take the right arm and reach across the body, placing the left hand on the upper right arm. Gently draw the right arm closer, and hold for 10 to 30 seconds. Release and then switch arms and repeat.

These are just some of the exercises and stretches seniors can practice to improve their balance and flexibility. More exercises can be found at https://www.silversneakers.com/blog/stretching-for-seniors-7-simple-moves-for-the-not-so-flexible-2/.

When exercising and stretching, seniors are urged to do so alongside an experienced trainer who can ensure their technique is proper. Seniors with preexisting conditions also are advised to speak with their physicians prior to performing these or other exercises to confirm the safety of the exercises.



Put Fall Leaves To Work For A Healthier Lawn

By Vicki Shadrick
Extension Agent
for Agriculture
and
Natural Resources

Autumn leaves put on a colorful show, but once reaching the ground, they can feel like another chore. Before reaching for the rake and bags, however, consider putting your mower to work. Mulching leaves can save time, return nutrients to your lawn and reduce waste sent to landfills.

University of Kentucky Turfgrass Extension recommends mowing leaves as part of regular lawn care. As leaves accumulate, raise the mower to its highest setting and mow when the leaves are dry so you can mow over them. A side-discharge mower can chop leaves, but a mulching mower does an especially good job of cutting them into small pieces. You can buy mulching kits and blades and add them to many mowers.

Similar to grass clippings, tree leaves contain nutrients. Soil microorganisms gradually break down the shredded leaves, releasing nutrients the lawn can use. This natural recycling provides a slow-release source of nutrients. Some evidence even suggests that mulching leaves can reduce dandelion weed populations in lawns.

If you prefer to collect leaves for use elsewhere in the yard, shred them before adding them to landscape beds. Avoid piling thick layers of whole leaves around plants. These layers can restrict air and water movement into the soil and keep it excessively wet, contributing to poor plant growth and disease.

This fall, let the leaves work for you rather than treating them as waste.

For more information about lawn care and using leaves in your landscape, contact the Webster County Cooperative Extension office.

Kentucky Department Of Education Announces ACT As State-Funded Exam

By Tom Latek
Kentucky Today

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has announced the award of a contract to ACT to administer the ACT test as the state-funded college admissions exam beginning in spring 2027.

The previous contract with the College Board to administer the SAT Junior State Administration cost $30 per student over four years. For the last administration of the ACT in 2025, Kentucky paid $38 per student for online testing and $39 per student for paper testing for the statewide administratio

The reduced testing cost between the 2025 ACT contract and the new one will save the state nearly $500,000 each year while continuing to provide all juniors with the opportunity to take a college admissions exam.

KDE is required to follow the?Kentucky Model Procurement Code, the part of state law governing how state agencies purchase goods and services, including large-scale contracts like statewide assessments. This process is designed to ensure fairness in vendor selection and was facilitated by the Kentucky Finance and Administration Cabinet

"We at KDE are thankful this process has been completed and that our schools now know which exam their juniors will take next spring," said Commissioner of Education Robbie Fletcher. "We want to thank the Finance and Administration Cabinet for working with us so closely to complete this process in a very efficient manner."

In July 2025, KDE completed a competitive procurement process. The contract was awarded to the College Board to administer the SAT Junior State Administration beginning in spring 2026. During the 2026 legislative session, the Kentucky General Assembly passed legislation requiring KDE to begin a new procurement for the state-provided college entrance exam to be implemented in the 2026-2027 school year.

"It is important that all students, regardless of zip code or circumstance, have access to opportunities that help them pursue college and career success," Fletcher said. "This contract helps us maintain that commitment while being responsible stewards of public resources."

The contract with ACT for the college admissions entrance exam is up to $1,425,000 annually to test up to 50,000 students at a cost of $28.50 per student. The cost per the contract with the College Board for the SAT was $1.5 million annually at $30 per student.

The contract also includes more free support for students, families and educators, including free online practice tests.

Kentucky Unemployment Rate Is 4.6%

By Tom Latek
Kentucky Today

Kentucky joined the nation in seeing a drop in the unemployment rate in October, according to the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS), an agency within the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet.

Kentucky's seasonally adjusted preliminary October 2026 unemployment rate was 4.6 percent, down from the 4.7 percent recorded in September. The U.S. seasonally adjusted jobless rate for October 2026 was 4.1%, which was down 0.1 percentage points from September, data from the U.S. Department of Labor indicated.

Kentucky's civilian labor force was 2,123,855 in October 2026, an increase of 7,361 individuals from September. The number of people employed in October was 2,026,303, up 9,345 from September. The number of unemployed was 97,552, a decrease of 1,984 from September.

In a separate federal survey of business establishments that excludes jobs in agriculture and people who are self-employed, Kentucky's seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment increased by 3,700 jobs to 2,036,000 in October compared to September. Kentucky's nonfarm employment was up 7,300 jobs compared to October 2025.

"Both surveys provided encouraging signals on Kentucky's employment situation," said University of Kentucky's Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) Director Mike Clark. "The household survey indicated that workers are continuing to enter Kentucky's labor market and find employment. Workers found jobs at a faster rate than they entered the labor force, which pushed Kentucky's unemployment rate down slightly in October."

He also noted, "The business survey showed that employers added more workers to their payrolls in October, with most of the gains concentrated in retail trade. "While the jobs gains for October are welcome news, the trend over the past few months shows relatively little change in Kentucky's total employment."

Civilian labor force statistics include nonmilitary workers and unemployed Kentuckians who are actively seeking work. They do not include unemployed Kentuckians who have not looked for employment within the past four weeks.

PUBLIC NOTICE

A meeting of the Webster County Drainage Board will be held on Monday, November 30th at 10:00 a.m., at the Webster County Extension Office. All taxpayers on public ditches are invited to attend.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Second reading of a proposed ordinance amending the Webster County Budget for fiscal year 2026-2027, to include unanticipated receipts from General Fund in the amount of $1,655,719, increasing expenditures total to $1,655,719, will be held Monday, December 14, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. at the Webster County Senior Center. A copy of the proposed ordinance with full text is available for public inspection at the office of the County Judge/Executive during normal business hours.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

The City of Clay is accepting sealed bids for the following municipal projects:

1. **Roofing Project** – Furnish all labor, materials, equipment, and necessary services for the repair and/or replacement of roofing on a municipal building.
2. **Lean-To Project** – Furnish all labor, materials, equipment, and necessary services for the construction of a lean-to structure.
3. **Building Project** – Furnish all labor, materials, equipment, and necessary services for the construction of a municipal building.

Contractors may submit bids on one, two, or all three projects. Each project should be priced separately.

Bid specifications may be obtained at the Municipal office, during regular business hours.

Sealed bids must be received by **4 pm** on **December 8, 2026.** Bids will be opened at the scheduled Council meeting.

The City reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informalities, and to accept the bid determined to be in the best interest of the City. 12/2c