360 Degrees

360 Degrees balance exercise is similar to The Clock. However, instead of pointing the foot to each number around the clock you and come back in The Crane, you go around the clock in a circle, all the way around and back, without returning to The Crane

Technical points:

Begin by aligning the body – feet hips width apart, outside of the feet pointing forwards, toes slightly inwards, knees soft, tail bone slightly tucked in, ears aligned with the shoulders aligned with the hips aligned with the ankles. Elongate the spine and relax your shoulders, arms and hands.

Imagine you are the centre of a clock. Distribute your bodyweight evenly on both feet.

Transfer your bodyweight on the right foot. Lift your left foot off the ground. You should now be in The Crane position.

Bend your support leg slightly and ensure the tripod is rooted into the ground. Activate your abdominal muscles and tense the right buttock so the right side of the hip doesn't push out to the side, going out of alignment, and both sides of the hip are levelled. Keep elongating the body and looking forwards while the nose, solar plexus and belly button are connected by a straight line, stacked on top of each other (i.e. do not lean back, forward or to the side).

Imagining you are the centre of a clock, point your left foot at 3pm (behind or in front of your support leg). Do so without placing any weight at all on your left foot and while keeping the body in alignment.

Slowly and smoothly move your left foot around your body (clockwise or counter clockwise depending on whether you started with the left foot in front or behind the support foot) forming and uniform full circle, gently brushing the surface of the floor or ground as you go along. Your support leg can be straight or bent.

Fig 72: 360 Degrees shows the 360 Degrees, on the right leg, going from 3 pm front to 3 pm behind and back to 3 pm front, so two full clocks. Here the left foot begins in front of the right foot, so it's going counter clockwise and then clockwise coming back.



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[Fig 72: 360 Degrees]

Ensure you that, as you move along, you keep the tripod firmly rooted into the ground and the buttocks tensed.

Go all the way around the clock, until you reach 3 pm again. That's 360 degrees. Reach as far as you can without changing your posture, your tripod or losing balance. Keep your body straight, with your core muscles engaged (belly button in towards the spine).

Once you've done a full circle you can either change legs or go back the same way. Just remember what you do on one side to repeat on the other. Breathe normally throughout the exercise, relaxing your shoulders, arms and hands.

Progression:

Perform the 360 Degrees on unstable surfaces.

Benefits:

Strengthening feet, ankles, knees and hip stability muscles.

Strengthening quads, adductors and abductors, glutes which in turn stabilise the hip and knees.

Improving balance, posture and postural awareness and focus.

Strengthening core muscles and spine stability muscles.

Reducing the risk of injuries such as ankle sprains or knee pain by strengthening and mobilising.

Speeding up recovery from injuries.

Common mistakes and/or weaknesses to be aware of:

Similar to The Clock

- Transferring body weight on the balls of the feet. The heel should be nailed into the ground and stable throughout.

- Leaning back, forward or to the side when reaching out around the clock. Keep alignment or think about re-aligning nose-solar plexus-belly button. (see *Fig 71: The Clock*)

- Hip goes out of alignment, pushing towards the outside. In this case the nose–solar plexus–belly button are not on top of each other anymore. Tuck in or tense the buttock on the corresponding side to bring everything back in alignment. (see *Fig 71: The Clock*)

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- Support knee buckling/dropping in. Knee should track the toes as much as possible (see *Fig 71: The Clock*)

- Toes turn and point outside. This can lead to overpronation of the foot and the knee buckling in, followed by the hip. The outside of the foot should point forward and the toes slightly to the inside. (see *Fig 71: The Clock*)

Notes

Similar to The Clock

Depending on the fitness level you can go around the clock and back.

However if when technique is lost or muscles hurt too much change legs and then come back and resume after a few minutes.

Another option is to go around a quarter or half with a very correct technique and keep changing legs. I.e: balance on the left leg for a quarter, balance on the right leg for a quarter, balance on the left leg for another quarter, balance on the right leg for another quarter and so on.

This exercise is about how slow and controlled you can move, not about how much you can do or how far you can stretch. You have to judge when it is time to stop, take a break or change legs. The priority is to keep the form. In order of importance:

1. Keep the form
2. Move very slow
3. Reach far
4. Keep going for a long time.

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