

Fitness – a key to fall prevention



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Keeping active helps prevent falls

Treatments including exercise for older adults can reduce the risk of falls¹

Staying physically active and exercising regularly can help prevent or delay some diseases and disabilities as people grow older. Older people of all ages have much to gain from staying active.²

You don't need a gym to exercise

Walking, gardening, and household chores are all physical activities that keep you moving, active and fit.

Major benefits of staying active:

- Maintains muscle strength
- Strengthens bones; slows down the process of osteoporosis
- Keeps joints, tendons and ligaments more flexible, making it easier to move around
- Increases energy
- Strengthens heart and lungs
- Promotes a sense of well-being

See the following pages for helpful exercises.

“If exercise could be packaged into a pill, it would be the single most widely prescribed and beneficial medicine in the nation.”

Robert N. Butler, M.D.

Former Director,
National Institute
on Aging

1. Province, Michael A. Ph.D. et al., “The Effects of Exercise on Falls in Elderly Patients,” Journal of the American Medical Association, May 3, 1995, Vol. 273, No. 17, 1341-1347.

2. Dutta, C., Ph.D., Ory, M., Ph.D. Co-Chairpersons, et al., Exercise: A Guide from the National Institute on Aging. What Can Exercise Do For Me?, 1998.

Exercises from a sitting position

Do not overdo it, start slowly and build the number of repetitions gradually. Use a firm chair.

Neck stretches

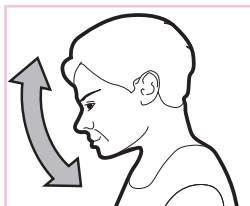
Side bends: Tilt head sideways as if to touch ear to shoulder.

Right: Hold 10 secs. 10 reps

Left: Hold 10 secs. 10 reps

Chin to chest: Bend chin forward to chest.

Hold 10 secs. 10 reps



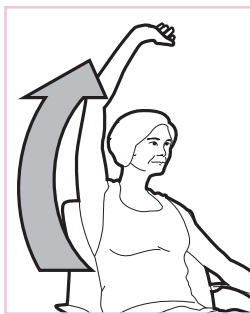
Arm raises

Raise arm up, pause at the top for 2 seconds and bring down.

Right arm: 10 reps

Left arm: 10 reps

Both arms: 10 reps

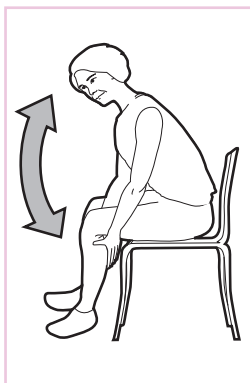


Back stretching and strengthening

Legs apart, place hands on each side of right knee. Slide hands from knee to ankle and return to upright sitting position.

Right knee: 10 reps

Left knee: 10 reps

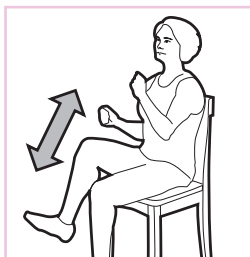


Seated marching

Alternate lifting knees to chest as if marching.

Right leg: 10-15 reps

Left leg: 10-15 reps



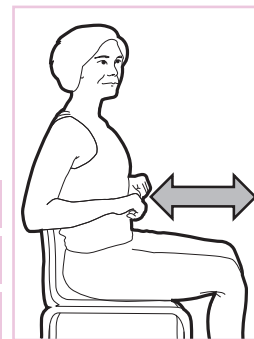
Rowing

Make sure to sit as straight as possible. Place arm straight out in front and then pull arm back with elbow next to your side.

Right arm: 10 reps

Left arm: 10 reps

Both arms: 10 reps

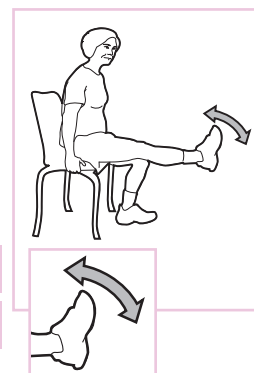


Ankle range of motion

Point toes up as far as possible and then down as far as possible. Rotate both feet.

Rotate Clockwise: 20 reps

Counterclockwise: 20 reps

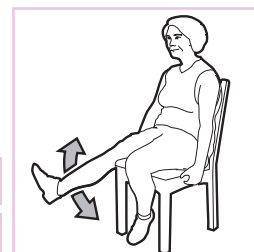


Knee extension

Straighten knee, pause and then lower foot back to floor.

Right leg: 10 reps

Left leg: 10 reps

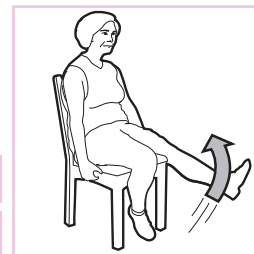


Small kicks

Straighten and bend knee, as in a kicking motion.

Right leg: 10-15 reps

Left leg: 10-15 reps



* secs. = seconds * reps = repetitions

Exercises from a standing position

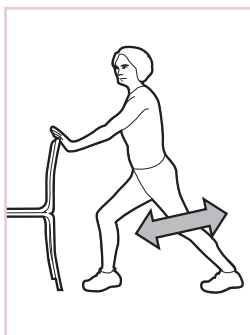
To maintain balance, use a kitchen counter or the back of a sturdy chair that doesn't have wheels.

Calf stretch

Hold back of sturdy chair. Step back with right foot, keeping foot straight. Lean forward, keeping right heel on floor.

Right leg: Hold 30 secs. 3 reps

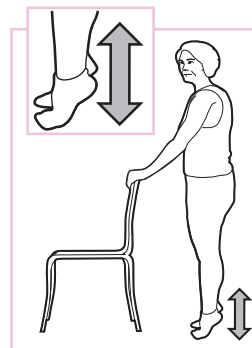
Left leg: Hold 30 secs. 3 reps



Heel and toe raise

Stand straight, feet shoulder-width apart, rise up on toes, pause, then lower back down. Then lift toes, keeping heels flat, and lower back down.

Both feet together: 10 reps

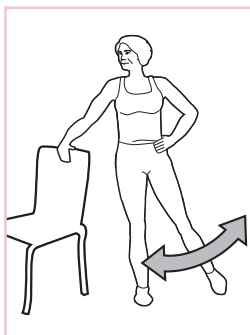


Lateral leg swing

Hold back of chair. Move right leg straight out to side without bending knee or waist. Keep toes pointed forward.

Right leg: 10 reps

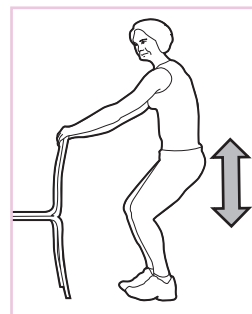
Left leg: 10 reps



Mini-squats

Hold back of chair. Bend knees as far as is comfortable. Keep back and head up straight and behind toes, as in diagram. Then return to standing position.

10 reps



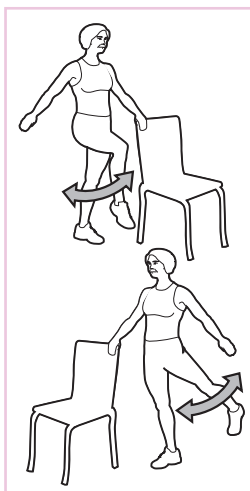
Hip flexion and extension

Hold the back of chair and bring your right knee up as close to the chest as possible, trying not to bend at the waist.

Slowly lower your leg and swing straight behind you without bending the knee. Then lower back to starting position.

Right leg: 10 reps

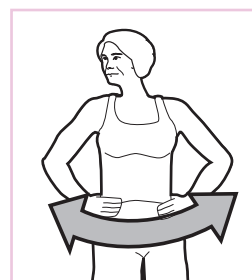
Left leg: 10 reps



Side-to-side twist

With feet shoulder-width apart, slowly twist your upper body from right to left. Stand as straight as possible.

10 reps



Note: Be sure to consult with your physician before beginning an exercise program. The exercises suggested here do not substitute for a program provided by your health practitioner.

* secs. = seconds * reps = repetitions

Consult: Troy Vannucci, registered physical therapist

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