

Exercises for older people



Sitting

Getting started

If you've not done much physical activity for a while, you may want to get the all-clear from a GP before starting.

For the exercises that require a chair, choose one that is stable, solid and without wheels. You should be able to sit with feet flat on the floor and knees bent at right angles. Avoid chairs with arms as this will restrict your movement.

Wear loose, comfortable clothing and keep some water handy.

Try to attempt these exercises at least twice a week, this will help to improve muscle strength, balance and co-ordination.

Build up slowly and aim to increase the repetitions of each exercise over time.

As your fitness improves, why not look for a group session near you? Age UK have lots of ideas. www.ageuk.org.uk

There are three other sets of exercises in this series: Flexibility, Strength and Balance. Go to www.nhs.uk/exercises-for-older-people to download.



CHEST STRETCH



This stretch is good for posture.

A. Sit upright and away from the back of the chair. Pull your shoulders back and down. Extend arms out to the side.

B. Gently push your chest forwards and up until you feel a stretch across your chest.

Hold for five to 10 seconds and repeat five times.

UPPER BODY TWIST



This will develop and maintain flexibility in the upper back.

A. Sit upright with feet flat on the floor, cross your arms and reach for your shoulders.

B. Without moving your hips, turn your upper body to the left as far as is comfortable.

Hold for five seconds. Repeat going right. Do five of each.

HIP MARCHING



This will strengthen hips and thighs and improve flexibility.

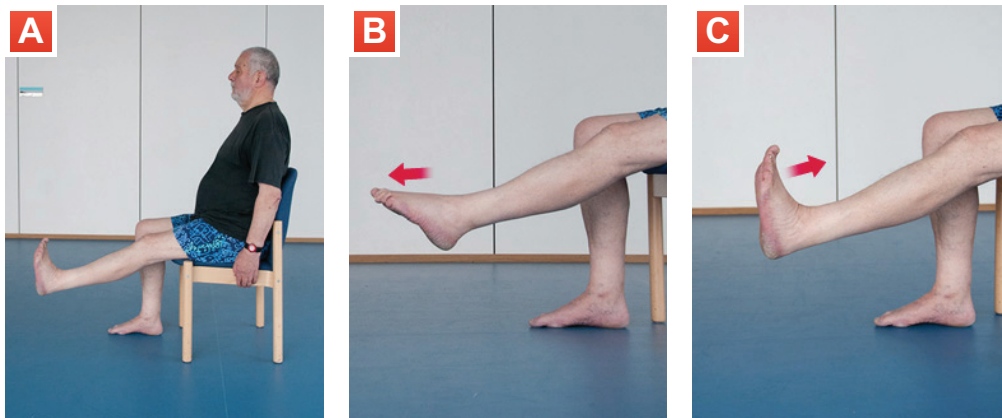
A. Sit upright and away from the back of the chair. Hold on to the sides of the chair.

B. Lift your left leg, with your knee bent, as far as is comfortable. Place foot down with control.

Repeat with the opposite leg. Do five lifts with each leg.



ANKLE STRETCH

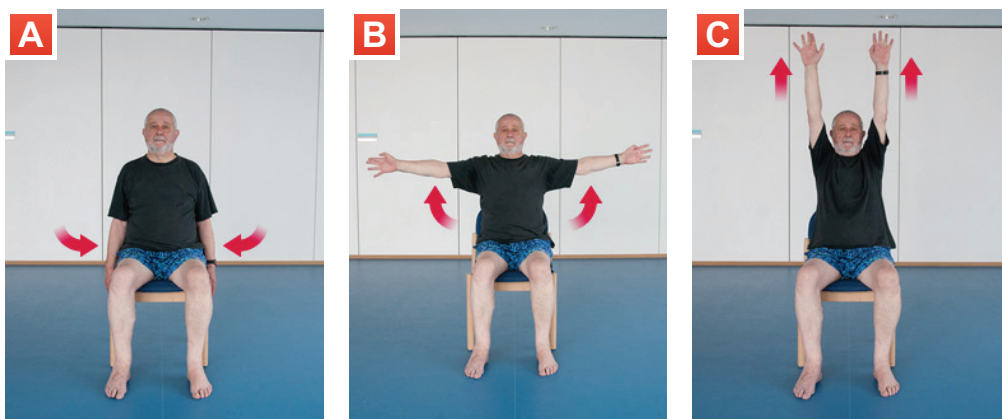


This will improve ankle flexibility and reduce blood clot risk.

- A. Sit upright, hold on to the side of the chair and straighten your left leg with your foot off the floor.
- B. With leg straight and raised, point your toes away from you.
- C. Point toes back towards you.

Try two sets of five stretches with each foot.

ARM RAISES



This builds shoulder strength.

- A. Sit upright, arms by your sides.
- B. With palms forwards, raise both arms out and to the side and up as far as is comfortable. Then return.
- C. Keep your shoulders down and arms straight throughout.

Breathe out as you raise your arms and breathe in as you lower them. Repeat five times.



NECK ROTATION



This stretch is good for improving neck mobility and flexibility.

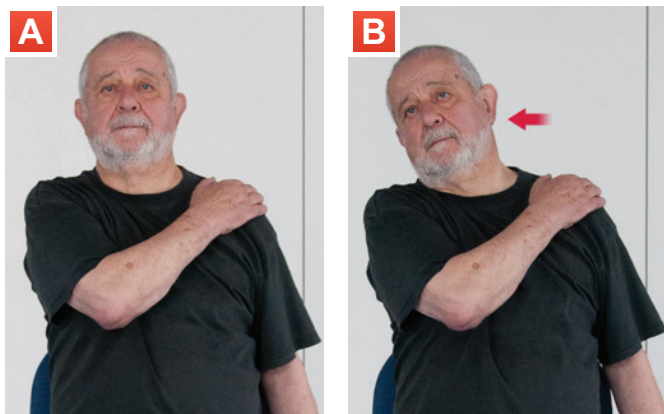
A. Sit upright with shoulders down. Look straight ahead.

B. Slowly turn your head towards your left shoulder as far as is comfortable. Hold for five seconds and return to starting position.

C. Repeat going right.

Do three rotations on each side.

NECK STRETCH



This stretch is good for loosening tight neck muscles.

A. Sitting upright, look straight ahead and hold your left shoulder down with your right hand.

B. Slowly tilt your head to the right while holding your shoulder down. Repeat on the opposite side.

Hold each stretch for five seconds and repeat three times on each side.