

HealthyActions

Achieving Your Goals for Healthy Living



Armchair Exercises

Exercising makes your body stronger. It helps you stay active. Stretching helps stiff joints move more freely. Here are some stretches and exercises that you can do from a chair in your own home.

Before you start an exercise program, talk to your doctor.

Use a sturdy chair with no arms and a high back.



How To Breathe When You Exercise

- Make sure you are sitting in a good position. (See reverse side).
- Breathe in slowly through your nose. Count “one...two.”
- Breathe out long and slow through your mouth. Count “one...two...three...four.” Squeeze your stomach as you breathe out. This supports your back.

Warm Up

Warm up your muscles before you exercise. Do 5-10 minutes of activity such as walking or marching in place.

Sit in a Good Position

- Sit up straight and tall. Look straight ahead.
- Move your shoulders up, back, and down, and leave them down.
- Stick your chin out and pull it back in.
- Breathe in and feel your chest lift. Keep your chest lifted.
- Squeeze your stomach to support your back as you breathe out.
- Make sure your hips touch the back of the chair.
- Make sure your spine is straight. If you need lower back support, use a rolled-up towel or small, firm pillow.
- Your feet should be flat on the floor. They should be about as far apart as your hips.
- Your knees should be over your ankles.
- Hang your hands at your sides, relaxed.
- Keep reaching up with the top of your head. Sit tall but relaxed.



Armchair Exercises

START



END



Seated Chest Press

1. Start in a good sitting position. Make sure your shoulders are down.
2. Put your upper arms by your sides. Your elbow should be bent. Your palms should face down. This is the “starting position.” Breathe in.
3. Breathe out as you push arms straight out in front of you. Straighten your arms but don’t lock your elbows. Squeeze your stomach. This is the “ending position.”
4. Breathe in and bring arms back to starting position.
5. Move only your shoulder joints and elbow.
6. Keep wrists level with arm.
7. Do 8-12 times.
8. You can change your starting position by lowering arms if needed.

START



END



Seated Leg Lifts

1. Start in a good sitting position.
2. Lift one leg in front of you. Keep it bent a little bit at the knee. Breathe in. This is the “starting position.”
3. Raise one leg one or two inches as you breathe out. Squeeze your stomach. This is the “ending position.”
4. Breathe in and lower leg one to two inches back to starting position.
5. Move only your knee and hip joints.
6. Do 8-12 times with the same leg.
7. Do 8-12 times with the other leg.

You can do a whole program of chair exercises. You can add weights as you get stronger. These exercises can improve your strength and balance.

Don’t forget to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise program!

Call the American Society on Aging at 1-800-537-9728, ext. 635. Ask about “Phase 6” of “Exercise for Life! A Physical Activity Program for Older Adults.”

* Exercises courtesy of “Exercise for Life! A Physical Activity Program for Older Adults,” a joint project of the American Society on Aging and the CDC.

Sources

American Society on Aging. Exercise for Life! A Physical Activity Program for Older Adults. <http://www.asaging.org/cdc/module6/phase6/Exercise%20for%20Life%20A%20Physical%20Activity%20Program%20for%20Older%20Adults.pdf>



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