

Exercise Program for Knee Arthritis

If you have knee arthritis, performing home exercises can help decrease pain and improve function in your knees.

There are 5 exercises in this program: Heel Slides with a Towel, Sit to Stands, Clamshells, Long Arc Quads, and Knee Flexion.

Start each exercise slowly. A little discomfort is normal, but stop any exercise that causes pain.

Now, let's get started.

To do heel slides with a towel: Sit on the floor with your legs straight in front of you. Place a towel, sheet, or belt around the heel of your affected leg.

Gently pull the towel towards you to assist sliding your heel towards your bottom.

Hold for 5 seconds. Then straighten your leg.

Repeat 10 times.

To do sit to stands: Stand facing away from a stable, armless chair. Place your feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart and point your toes out slightly.

Hold your arms out in front of you or cross them over your shoulders.

Bend your knees to slowly sit down in the chair. Pause briefly, then push through your legs to stand back up. Do not use your hands to help you.

Repeat 10 times.

To do clamshells: Lie on your side and bend both knees.

Keeping your feet together, lift your top knee up so your knees are separated.

Slowly lower your knee back down.

Repeat 10 times. Then switch sides.

To do long arc quads: Sit in a chair with your feet shoulder-width apart.

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Lift one leg out as straight as possible.

Hold for 5 seconds, then slowly lower your leg back down.

Repeat 10 times. Then switch legs.

To do knee flexion: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Place your hands on the back of a chair, table, or countertop for balance.

Bend one knee to bring your foot back toward your buttocks. Lift your foot as high as you can or until your lower leg is parallel to the floor.

Pause briefly, then lower your leg back down.

Repeat 10 times. Then switch legs.

Talk to your healthcare provider or physical therapist about these exercises and others to improve function in your knee.