

Seated Exercises for Older Adults

Exercise is one of the best things you can do for good health ...but what if the "usual" idea of exercise is just not possible?

Maybe you have balance problems ... or you aren't strong enough.

But you can still exercise ... and all you need is a chair and a ball or a pillow.

These five exercises are safe for most people ...

but if you're not sure if you should do them, talk to your doctor.

The first exercise is a stretch ... a chin tuck.

Slowly tuck your chin down as you glide your head back.

You'll feel a stretch in the back of your neck, and sometimes into your upper back.

Hold this position for about 6 seconds.

Then relax your chin and head completely for 10 seconds.

Do this 8 to 10 times.

The next exercise is arm circles.

For these, you'll outline circles in front of you while holding a ball or a pillow.

Raise the pillow straight above your head.

Keeping your arms straight, bring the pillow down to one side, then move it in front of you, to your other side, and back above your head.

Now do the same thing in the opposite direction.

Above the head ... to one side, to the front, to the other side, and above your head.

Start by making these circles for 1 minute.

Try to work up to 5 minutes or longer.

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Now let's do a knee extension ... This stretches and strengthens your leg.

From your sitting position, straighten and lift one leg as far as you can.

Hold it as you slowly count to five.

Then slowly lower your leg.

Do this 8 to 12 times for each leg.

The next exercise is a chair push-up.

Sit up with your feet flat on the floor.

Grip the armrests, and take a deep breath in.

Now breathe out and use only your arms, not your legs, to push your body off the chair.

Straighten your arms as much as you can.

Hold this for 1 or 2 seconds ... and then lower yourself back to the chair.

Do this as many times as you can. Try to work up to 8 to 12 times.

The last exercise ... elbow to knee ... will get your heart rate up a little.

Put your arms above your head as far as you can.

Raise your right knee while you lower your left elbow ...

Bring your elbow and knee as close together as you can ...and then return to the start position.

Now raise your left knee and lower your right elbow, and then return to the start position.

Do this exercise in a smooth rhythm.

At first, try to do it for 1 minute.

Over time, see if you can build up to 5 minutes or longer.

Now one last thing.

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It's okay to start slowly, and choose only a few exercises to start with, or to do them for a shorter period of time.

And as you feel stronger , try to do more of them, or for a longer time.

There's a lot to choose from.

Is there an exercise here that looks right for you?