

LET'S GET A MOVE ON!

and step into spring



Wash away the winter
blues and stay active

Keeping active is an important way to stay healthy both physically and mentally. The combination of winter weather and lockdown has made it harder to get out and this may have affected your mood and wellbeing. Keeping physically active can help release 'happy hormones' and now that spring is on its way, it's a great time to think about boosting your activity levels. There are really simple ways to help you feel stronger, healthier and happier that don't cost anything and can be done within your home.

Caroline Robertson, Falls Prevention Co-ordinator for the NHS suggests a few simple actions to ensure you can stay active.

- Limit the amount of time spent sitting. Put an egg timer by your chair or use a mobile phone to remind you to stand up every 20 to 30 minutes. This will stop you stiffening up and may help ease joint pain.
- Household tasks such as dusting, hovering, washing up, cleaning windows all count as physical activity.
- Gardening can be a great boost to your morale – weeding and potting up plants all count towards being physically active.
- Older adults will benefit from activities that build muscle strength, improve balance and increase heart rate slightly. For further information on physical activity guidelines, please go to:
www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/physical-activity-guidelines-older-adults

Simple measures to stay active

AgeUK have put some exercises together, with the help of Stephen Macconville, fitness lead at Nuffield Health, that you can do at home.

Whether you enjoyed going to the gym or attending an exercise class, you stayed active by going to the shops or running around after the grandchildren or you're not as active as you once were, these activities are suitable for most abilities. What's important is that while you're at home, you continue to do what you can.

If you are concerned about your balance or general health it is always advisable to seek medical advice before starting a new exercise programme.

Do what you can and start slowly

It is fine to push yourself a little bit, but don't do anything that doesn't feel comfortable and trust your instincts about your own limits. Stop if you are feeling any pain or lightheaded and make sure to rest and stay hydrated. A little soreness in muscles and joints after exercise is quite normal for the first day or two.

Chair squats (sit to stand)

To help strengthen the muscles of the lower body, bones and joints

- 1 Stand in front of a chair with your feet as far apart as your hips.
- 2 Bend your knees while keeping your shoulders and chest upright.
- 3 Lower your bottom slowly (four seconds) so you sit down.
- 4 Then push your body back up to return to a standing position (two to four seconds).
- 5 Try to avoid using your hands.
- 6 Aim to perform these five to ten times or for a duration of 20 to 60 seconds, take a rest after for 40 to 60 seconds.
- 7 Repeat this action two to five times.
- 8 If you don't feel like you can do this exercise in full, just try bending your legs a little until you feel you can go further. Then work towards the full activity.



The stork (single leg stands)

To improve balance and bone strength

- 1 Stand facing a non-moveable chair or surface for support if you need it.
- 2 Warm up with a slow march for one minute.
- 3 With your arms at your side, slowly lift your left foot and balance on your right foot for 10 seconds.
- 4 Slowly lower your left foot and repeat with your right foot.
- 5 Aim to build up the duration by five seconds each time as you feel more comfortable.
- 6 To increase difficulty, try raising your hand above your head on the same side or slowly swinging your arms like you're running.
- 7 Repeat on both legs three to five times each.



Stair stepping

To improve coordination, aerobic fitness for heart health and lower body strength

- 1** Stand in front of a staircase or step and step up with your right foot, then up with your left.
- 2** Then step back down with your right, then back down with your left. Try to repeat 10 times or for a period of 20 to 60 seconds.
- 3** Take a rest before changing the leading foot.
- 4** If you need a little support, hold on gently to the railing, or gently touch the wall with your finger tip.
- 5** If this is comfortable, to increase difficulty, hold some weight in each hand such as a bottle of water.
- 6** Try to perform these two to five times, take a break for 40 to 60 seconds before repeating again.



Wall snow angels

To improve mobility, posture and strength

- 1 Stand with your upper back, head, bottom and heels against the wall.
- 2 Start with your hands out to the side with your palms facing outwards.
- 3 While maintaining contact with the wall, slowly raise your hands above your head, stretching as wide and as high as possible.
4. Slowly return to your starting position and then repeat – aim to complete five to ten times.
5. Perform this two to three times, take a break for 40 to 60 seconds before repeating again.



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