

Exercises for older people



Flexibility

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: Sitting, Strength and Balance.
Go to www.nhs.uk/exercises-for-older-people to download.



NECK ROTATION



This stretch is good for improving neck mobility and flexibility.

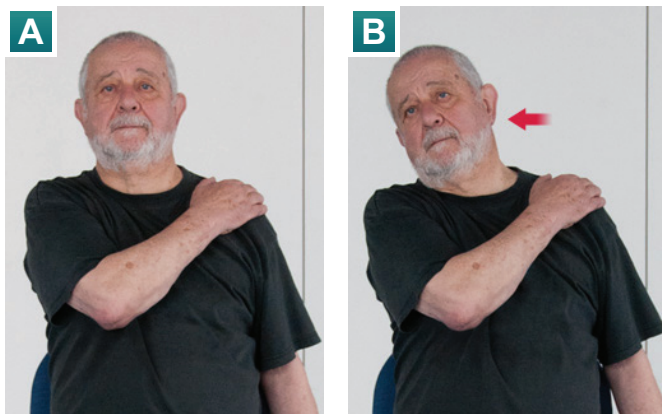
A. Sit upright with shoulders down. Look straight ahead.

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.



SIDEWAYS BEND



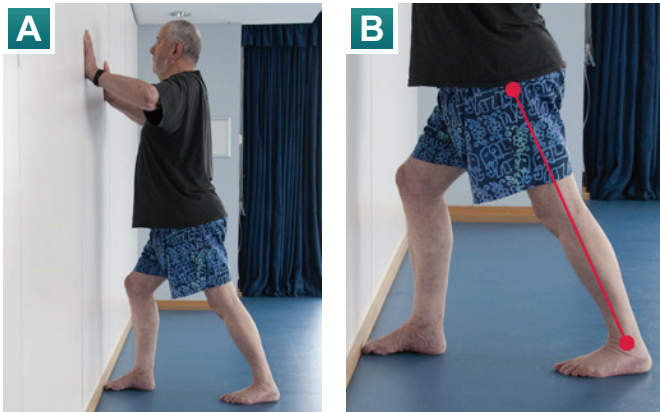
A. Stand upright with your feet hip-width apart and arms by your sides.

B. Slide your left arm down your side as far as is comfortable. As you lower your arm, you should feel a stretch on the opposite hip.

Repeat with your right arm down your right side.

Hold each stretch for two seconds and perform three on each side.

CALF STRETCH



A. Place your hands against a wall for stability. Bend the right leg and step the left leg back at least a foot's distance, keeping it straight. Both feet should be flat on the floor.

B. The left calf muscle is stretched by keeping the left leg as straight as possible and the left heel on the floor.

Repeat with the opposite leg and perform three on each side.