

1



GET READY. Focus on posture: Sit on your sitz bones (if you sit on your hands, you can probably feel them) rather than your tailbone. Tighten your belly (think about bringing your belly button toward your spine), lift the rib cage, hold your neck long and straight, and tuck your chin down and back so you feel a long stretch on the back of your neck. “Feel like you have a string pulling up from the top of your head,” suggests Mary Ann Wilson, RN, an ACE-certified trainer and host of *Sit and Be Fit* on PBS for almost 27 years. Breathe from the belly (you want your stomach to expand, not just your chest). That alone can be a tough position to hold at first! But work to build it up, because you’ll need it for every other move you do.

2



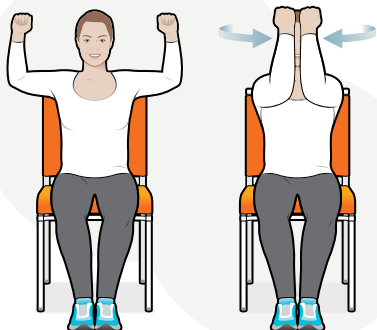
MARCH IN PLACE. While you’re holding an upright posture, march in place with your seat firmly planted. Swing the opposite arm as you march each foot forward. Anne Pringle Burnell, an ACE- and Aerobics and Fitness Association of America-certified trainer and founder of Stronger Seniors, suggests alternating marches with toe taps and heel taps. “An easy choice for [adding] aerobics is when you reach and tap one toe forward, reach hands forward at the same time,” Burnell says. Use either the same or opposite arm or both arms at once. “You can reach higher and higher, or do a little boxing maneuver with jabs, uppercuts, a cross punch, and a hook.” If you’re new to exercise, marching in place with arm movements for 20 minutes will get your heart rate pumping to aerobic levels.

3



SEATED JUMPING JACK. It’s no great leap to modify some traditional moves. Nicole Nichols, an ACE-certified personal trainer and fitness expert at sparkpeople.com, recommends the seated jumping jack. Start with knees bent and arms resting at your sides; then extend your legs, straight and wide, with heels on the floor, and raise your arms in a V. Then bring your limbs back to the center. Repeat for several minutes. “It does actually elevate the heart rate and give you an aerobic benefit, but the key is to do it long enough—at least 10 minutes or so,” Nichols says.

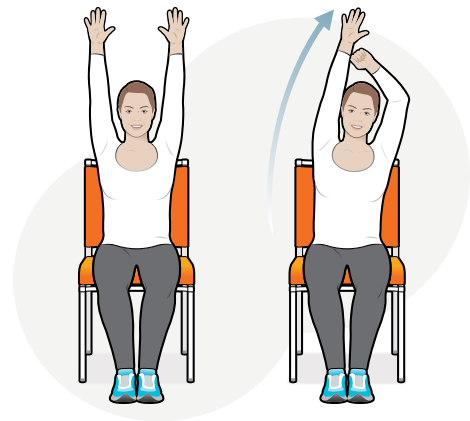
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DO THE “PEEKABOO.” This will work your entire upper body, says Langdon. Form a goalpost with your arms: Keep your upper arms (shoulders to elbows) parallel to the floor and your lower arms (elbows to hands) perpendicular to it. Bring your forearms together in front of your face. Return your arms to the starting point, squeezing your shoulder blades together, and repeat as long as you can hold proper form. Your back, chest, and arms will get a workout.

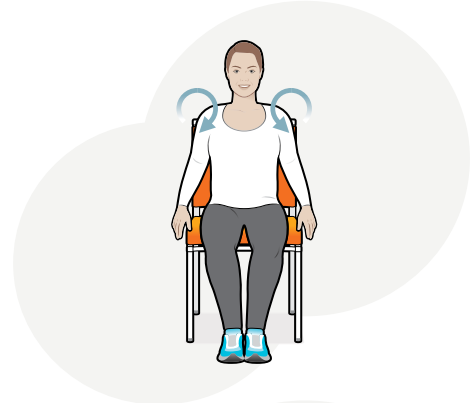
Illustrations by David Preiss

RELEASE SOME TENSION. “Take a little back break during the day!” Burnell says. This move works well even for office folks who have to sit at a desk, says Burnell. With the best posture you can muster, stretch and reach your arms overhead so that you’re lengthening your spine. Alternate moving your hands as though you’re climbing a rope, pulling yourself up. You’ll notice that you’re getting movement in your rib cage and spine. “This is a great exercise to get people to not squish their spines,” Burnell says.



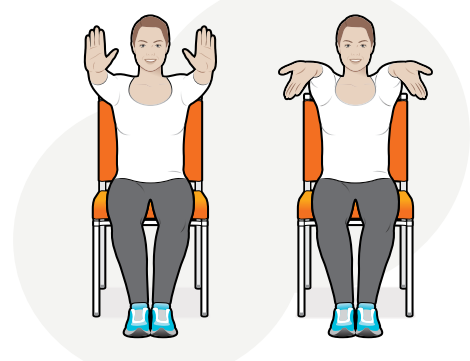
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MOVE YOUR JOINTS. “We need to lubricate the joints, which means moving those joints in a gentle way,” says Wilson. She says to get synovial fluid (the liquid that protects joints) moving, picture a sponge between each joint: When you flex it, you wring it out, and when you relax it, liquid is let back in. Shoulder rolls are great for this because they make four major muscle groups meet. Bring your shoulders forward, up to your ears, back, and then relax. Repeat as long as it feels good. Before you switch to roll your shoulders backwards, Wilson suggests letting your arms hang and swing gently, like pendulums. “It’s great for the rotator cuff,” she says. “Lubricating that joint with that pendulum move is something just about everybody can do.”



6

FOCUS ON EXTREMITIES. Langdon suggests working the wrists first. Hold your arms straight in front of you and flex the wrist, as though you’re saying “Halt!” Then rotate your palm so your fingertips point toward the floor. Repeat until you feel the stretch. When working the ankles, Langdon suggests drawing letters of the alphabet with each foot. “Spelling your name, writing love notes to [your] sweetie, whatever! If you add resistance bands or light [ankle] weights, you can get a genuine strengthening workout as well,” she says.



7

GET HEAVY. Adding some light exercise weights (dumbbells, weighted balls, or even a soup can) or resistance bands is an important way to gain strength. Nichols suggests getting a resistance band (found at some discount stores for as little as \$3) and anchoring it by sitting on it. Now you can work your entire upper body—holding the ends of the band in your hands, try starting with bicep curls.



Safety Note

If you put all these moves together, you can work up to your 30 minutes of exercise per day. But if you’re not there yet or don’t have time for one longer workout, don’t fret. You can exercise in 10-minute chunks. And if you’re just starting off, start slow and listen to your body. “You should not have any pain when you’re exercising,” says Wilson. “If you go to a point of mild discomfort, then back off.”

Talk to your doctor before making any big change in your exercise plan.

AT HOME EXERCISES

The opportunities to exercise and be physically active daily are endless! Here are some ideas of exercises that can be easily done at home that target improving balance, stability, and muscular strength. These can be performed with minimal rest in between exercises, i.e. in a circuit, to challenge and improve aerobic fitness.

Example circuit 1: pick 5-6 exercises; perform each exercise with 30 seconds rest between each; repeat circuit 2-3 times.

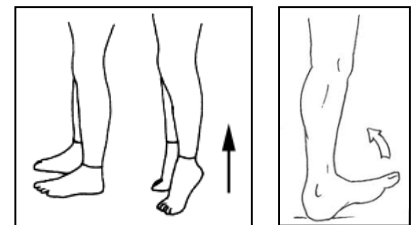
Example circuit 2: pick 5-6 exercises; perform each exercise for 30 seconds; between exercises perform 30 seconds of jumping jacks, pretend jump rope, skipping, etc.; repeat circuit 2-3 times.

1. **Balance on one foot:** maintaining an upright posture, stand on one foot for 30 seconds. Repeat on the other foot. Try to do several sets on each leg and work up to balancing for 60 seconds or more.

Progression: stand on an unstable surface (exercise mat, balance pad, BOSU ball, fold up a towel, etc.) or even close your eyes.

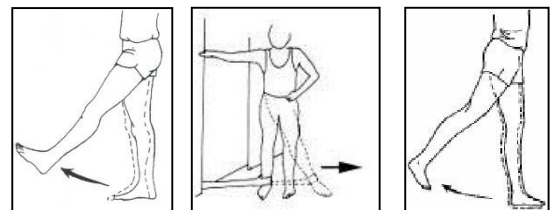
2. **Heel/toe raises:** maintaining an upright posture, raise your heels/toes. Hold for a second, and then lower back down. Do 10-15 repetitions for both heel raises and toe raises.

Progression: perform the exercises on one leg, add external weight, increase repetitions, or perform the exercises on the stairs (holding on to the railing if needed). An idea could be performing one repetition on the first stair, two reps on the second, three reps on the third, and so forth until you reach the top!



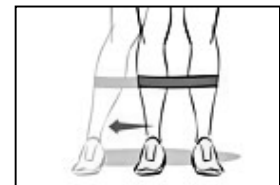
3. **Multi-directional leg lifts:** maintaining an upright posture, hold on to a sturdy surface (if needed) and lift one leg forward (flexion) with your leg straight. Hold for a second, and then lower back down. Repeat 10-15 times. Lift your leg out to the side (abduction) with your leg straight. Hold for a second, and then lower back down. Repeat 10-15 times. Lift your leg behind you (extension) with your leg straight. Hold for a second, and then lower down. Repeat 10-15 times.

Progression: remove hands as support, add resistance bands, and/or increase repetitions. (Pictures illustrate flexion, abduction, and extension, respectively).



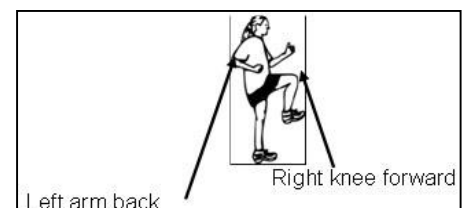
4. **Lateral walking:** maintaining an upright posture, start with your feet shoulder width apart and bend your knees, sitting back like you would sit in a chair. Take a step to the side with one foot. Bring the other foot in so your feet are shoulder width again. Continue walking laterally for 10-15 steps in one direction. Go back in the other direction, leading with the opposite leg.

Progression: add resistance bands or even hold on to a heavy object.



5. **Marching:** maintain an upright posture and march in place.

Progression: increase time marching before resting, bring opposite elbow to opposite knee to work your internal/external oblique muscles, or high knee running.

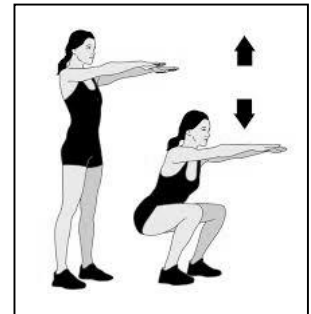


6. **Push ups:** from a plank position (wrists in line with your shoulders, core contracted, back flat, legs straight and toes planted firmly on the ground) or from your knees, slowly lower your body towards the grounds, arms bending at least 90 degrees. Return to plank or kneeling position. Repeat 10 times.

Progression: increase repetitions and/or keep the elbows in towards your sides to target your triceps.

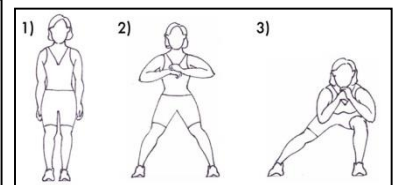
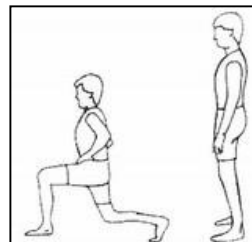
7. **Squats:** stand with your feet shoulder width apart, feet slightly turned out, and sit your bottom back as if you were sitting in a chair. Stand back up. Repeat 10-15 times. This can also be performed with a wider stance (sumo squat), or toes pointed farther out. Try all variations.

Progression: add external weight (barbell, dumbbells, heavy object, etc.), single leg squat, or single leg squat and reach, add an explosive jump when you stand back up (squat jumps).



8. **Lunges:** stand with your feet shoulder width apart, step forward with one foot and bend both knees. Make sure the front knee does not move forward beyond the toes. Push off the front leg and step back to standing. Repeat 10-15 times on both legs. Lunges can also be performed by stepping back instead of forward (reverse lunges) or stepping to the side (side lunges) by stepping out with one leg and sitting back as if you are sitting in a chair. Try all variations of lunges.

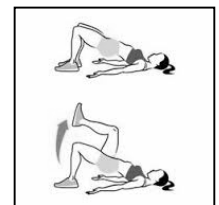
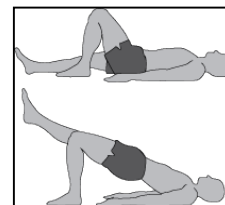
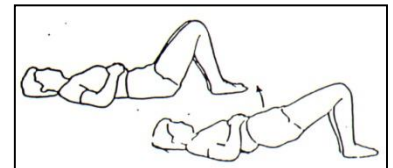
Progression: add external weight (barbell, dumbbells, heavy object, etc.), increase repetitions, or switch jumps (lunge, jump to switch which leg is in front, and repeat).



9. **Bridging:** lay on your back with your hands by your sides, your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Make sure your feet are under your knees. Raise your hips up to create a straight line from your knees to shoulders. Squeeze your bottom and squeeze your core, trying to pull your belly button back toward your spine.

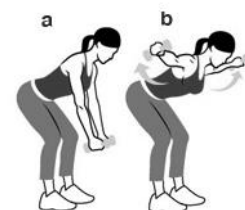
The goal is to maintain a straight line from your shoulders to your knees and hold for 20 to 30 seconds. Repeat 10-15 times.

Progression: single leg bridging or maintain bridge position and add marching (see pictures).



10. **Reverse chest fly:** standing with your feet shoulder width apart, bend your knees and hinge slightly forward at the hips; hold dumbbells (water bottles, cans, whatever you can find at home to add resistance) in each hand, pinch your shoulder blades together and laterally raise your arms (elbows pointing to the ceiling; hold for 2 seconds, and slowly lower down. Repeat 10 times.

Progression: perform exercise standing on one leg, increase resistance, add a longer isometric hold before lowering arms down, or perform exercise prone on a stability ball.



Core Stability Circuit

1. **Draw in maneuver:** on your back with your feet flat on the ground, roll your hips under so your back is flat on the ground by squeezing your transverse abdominal muscles. Hold for 10 seconds; repeat 5-10 times.
2. **Floor marching:** in the same position, perform a draw in maneuver; begin marching by lifting one knee towards chest (to 90°), lowering down, and repeating with the other leg. Continue marching for 5-10 times each leg. Make sure to keep your transverse abdominal muscles contracted.
3. **100's:** on your back with your legs in the air, raise your shoulders off the ground, with your arms straight by your sides (slightly off the ground); pump your arms 5 times as you breathe in, and pump your arms 5 times while you breathe out. This is one repetition. Repeat 5-10 times.
4. **Seated twists:** Sitting in a chair, put your hands behind your head with your elbows out to the sides. Using only your core, twist gently to one side and hold for 3 seconds. Slowly return to center, and repeat on the other side. Repeat 5-10 times each direction.
5. **Pelvic clocks:** Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, have a slight bend in your knees, place your hands on your hips and rotate your hips in a circle. Make sure that the movement comes from your core. Your upper body and lower body should remain still while you are rotating your hips. Circle 5-10 times in one direction, and repeat 5-10 times in the other direction.
6. **Press ups:** Lying prone (on your belly, face towards the ground), place your hands by your chest (elbows bent) and slowly press your upper body off the ground. Your legs/hips should remain on the ground.
*These should be performed as tolerable. If you cannot perform this exercise without pain, do not include it in your core circuit.

Progression for the circuit:

- Start with 5 repetitions for each exercise and go through the circuit 1-2 times.
- Move to 5-7 repetitions for each exercise and go through the circuit 2 times
- Finally, perform 10 repetitions of each exercise and go through the circuit 2 times

This circuit should be performed **2-3 times per week**.

DAILY: you should work on your draw in maneuver daily. This can be lying down, standing, or even sitting at your desk. It is important that we consciously think about activating our abdominal muscles at all time because it is involved in all of our movements, even just sitting or standing. If we do not activate our abdominal muscles, we force our back muscles to do all the work!

Increasing Physical Activity during the Work Day

Physical activity improves your physical, mental, and social wellbeing!

Physical Benefits

- Reduced risk of premature death from cardiovascular disease and stroke
- Reduced risk of developing high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and some cancers
- Reversal of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and other chronic diseases
- Increased muscle and bone strength
- Increased energy level

Mental Benefits

- Reduced feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression
- Improved concentration
- Enhanced memory and learning

Social Benefits

- Increased family and community connectedness
- Improved community networks and social capital
- Reduced sense of isolation and loneliness
- Enhanced social skills and self esteem

Simple ways to increase your physical activity while on the job:

- Park further away from the workplace entrance
- Use one of your break periods to take a walk. Ask a coworker to go with you!
- Take short fitness breaks (3-5 minutes each) every hour throughout the day. You can even set your phone alarm to remind you.
- Walk up and down the stairs a few times
- Stand up and sit down a few times to loosen your muscles
- Organize your desk in a way that forces you to stand up to type, grab files, or answer the phone
- Sit on an exercise ball instead of a chair
- Water bottle arm lifts (or keep a set of small dumbbells by your desk)
- Get up and go talk to a coworker, rather than email
- Every time you go to sit down in your chair, do 10 chair squats before sitting down
- Hold a walking meeting
- Using the microwave? Pick an activity (squats, lunges, standing on one leg, heel raises, be creative) while you wait
- Get your 8 glasses of water in at work by taking 8 trips to the water cooler, water fountain, or sink

Physical Activity Barriers

What are your top 3 barriers to being physically active/exercising daily?

1.

2.

3.

Let's problem solve. How can you overcome these barriers?

1.

2.

3.

Low hanging fruit: What is something that you can easily do right now to increase your daily physical activity?

This week, I commit to increasing my daily physical activity by:

Accountability plan: who/what is going to keep me accountable for this goal?