

Try to do some form of stretching, flexibility & balance exercise every day – even if it is only while you are watching TV. Make a specific time each day to do these exercises or fit them in whenever you can. If you can, also try to reduce the time you spend sitting for long periods. Don't hold your breath when you do any of these exercises.

As you progress, you can do all these only holding on with one fingertip, then not holding at all. If this is easy for you, with your eyes closed or holding hand weights.

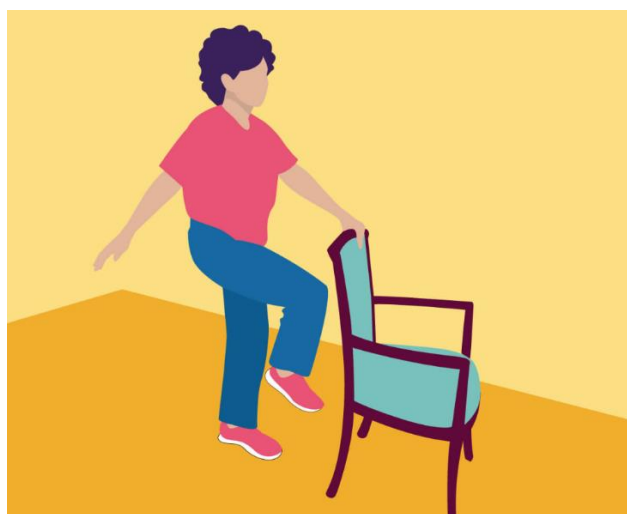
Exercises standing using a stable surface for support

Single leg stand

Start with your feet at hip-width. While holding onto a counter, lift one foot off the ground slightly. Keep your body tall and avoid leaning onto your planted foot.

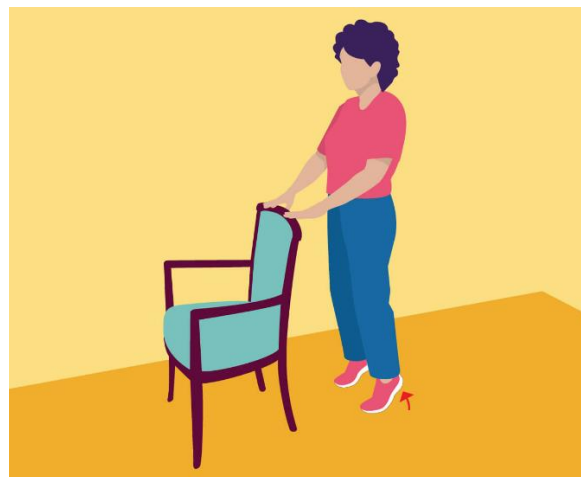
Hold your foot up for 10 to 15 seconds.

Repeat 5 times on each leg.



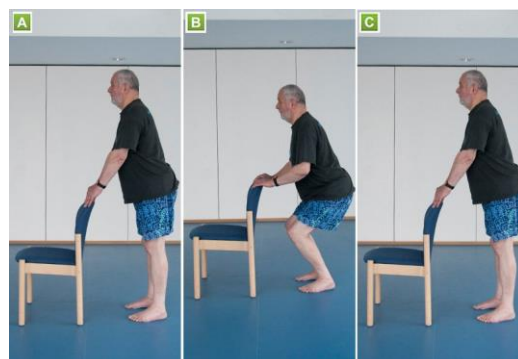
Heel raises (for strength and balance)

Stand sideways to the support, feet apart (shoulder width) holding on with one hand to support yourself. Slowly rise up on to your toes, hold for one second and lower again. Do this 8 times to begin with, increasing to 15. Make sure your movements are not rushed. This can also be done in sitting if standing is initially too hard.



Half squats (improves leg strength)

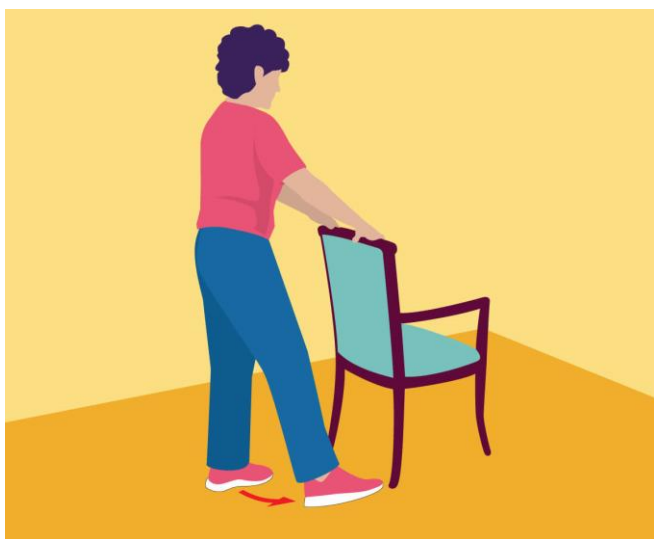
Stand facing the support with your feet apart (about shoulder width), feet facing forward and holding on with both hands. Leaning very slightly forward, but keeping your back straight, slowly bend both legs, keeping your knees over your feet. Do not go down too far. As you return to the up position, squeeze your buttocks. Repeat 8 times at first, increasing to 15.



Standing leg raises (*improves both strength and balance*)

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. While holding onto a support, extend your leg forward, hold for 1 second and return to your starting position. Repeat this motion to the side, returning to the starting position each time. Finally, extend your leg back and return to the starting position. Perform each movement 5 to 10 times on each leg. As you get stronger repeat the whole sequence up to 5 times.

When you feel very strong stand sideways holding on with one hand, do each side 5 to 10 times, then turn around and do it with the other leg.

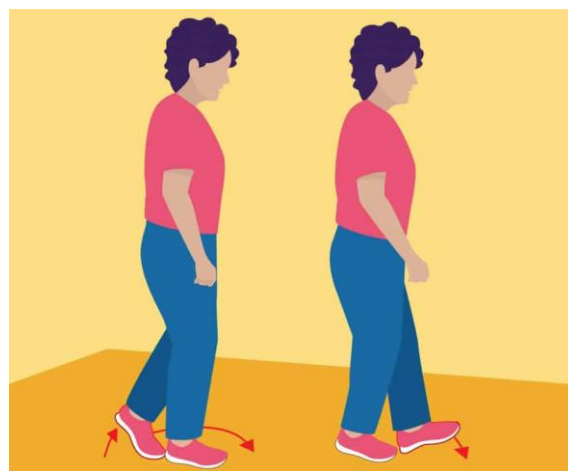


Walk heel to toe (*balance*) – Tandem standing or walking

Stand next to a support holding on to start with. Step forward by putting the heel of one foot directly in front of the toes of the other foot, so that they touch (or almost touch). Step forward then back with each leg 5-10 times each leg).

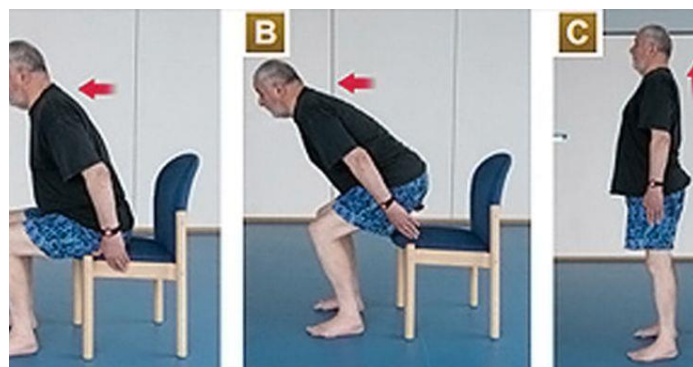
Or hold the position for 10 seconds.

Or as you get more stable try taking up to 20 steps in a row.



Stand up and sit down (or chair raise) (*for strength and balance*)

Sit on the edge of a chair with your feet flat on the floor and slightly apart. Without using your hands as support stand up and sit down, in a controlled way. Repeat for 30 seconds – 1 minute. Try to gradually increase the number you do in 1 minute.



Exercises done in a chair - these can be done when you are watching TV

Knee lifts (for strength) – seated marching

Sit back in your chair with your back straight, feet on the floor. Alternate lifting your knees to your chest as if you were marching. If you wish you can also Move your arms in unison with your legs as well.

Do 8 -15 reps for each leg.

If marching is initially too hard just bend your knee and lift your left leg towards your chest. Hold for a few seconds then lower slowly. Do this 8 – 10 times with each leg.



Seated leg lifts

Sit up straight in a sturdy chair. Keep your feet flat on the floor. Lift one leg straight out in front of you. Hold the lifted position for 10 seconds. Lower your leg back to the starting position. Repeat with the other leg. 5-10 reps



Seated abdominal twist (flexibility)

Sit up straight in a chair. Feet hip width apart. Arms at your side, elbows bent to 90. Keeping hips and knees facing forward, slowly twist from the waist to your left, and then right, as far as you can comfortably go. Repeat for 5 reps gradually increasing to 10. Remember to perform this exercise gently and within your comfort level.



Overhead reach and side bends (Flexibility)

Raise both arms straight above your head. Slowly drop your right arm and lean to the right. Feel the stretch in your left side. Hold for at least 15 seconds. Go back to your original position with your arms over your head. Then drop your left arm and lean to the left. Repeat 2 to 4 times toward each side.

