



Irish Society of
Chartered
Physiotherapists
The Voice of Physiotherapy in Ireland

A GUIDE TO Helping older people stay active at home

Exercises developed by its members in the HSE
Community Physiotherapy Service in Cork



No matter what your age or level of ability, regular movement benefits your physical, social and emotional wellbeing. No one size fits all and it is important to find activities that suit your health needs, level of ability and confidence, are enjoyable and can be done easily and often at home. Safety is important. There is a risk of injury if you move too fast, don't have adequate support during balance activities or try keep up with people much fitter and stronger than you.

With so many movements/exercises to choose from, It is helpful to focus on movements you don't always find easy, and get into the habit of doing them 'little and often' during your day. For example;

- 1. Boost circulation:** If you feel sluggish, low in energy or have been sitting for a long time, movements that boost your circulation, increase your heart rate and get blood flowing to your brain are beneficial. A light marching action with your legs and arms in sitting or standing for 1-2 minutes is a great start.
- 2. Improve flexibility:** If your joints and muscles feel stiff or restricted, slow stretches as far as is comfortable while keeping a good posture will help you reach, turn and bend easier. 'Motion is lotion' and our joints need regular movement for nourishment and to stay in good shape.
- 3. Improve strength:** If you use your hands to get up off the sofa, get up from kneeling or go upstairs, then exercises to strengthen your legs especially ankles, knees and hips are helpful. These include heel lifts, toe raises and knee bends which can easily be added to regular daily activities until they become a habit.
- 4. Improve stability:** If you feel a bit unsteady on your feet, then regular balance activities can improve stability and keep your reactions sharp in case you trip. Always have solid supports around you like a table, kitchen counter or wall for safety. Start with small balance activities and only progress to more 'wobbly' activities like stepping in different directions if you aren't relying on your hands for support and can easily take a wide 'recovery' step when you wobble. If you have good leg strength and want to combine movement challenges with brain games, you might like the 'Clock Yourself' App designed by a physiotherapist to help you think and react quickly on your feet.



Remember

- Work at a pace that suits your fitness level. Not everyone finds movement easy, so build on what you are currently doing and from a level that is comfortable for you.
- Be aware of your breathing and try keep your breaths slow, deep and controlled.
- Sit less and move more. Try to stand up every 30 minutes and move for 2 mins.
- You are never too old to improve your movement. Every movement counts. Do a little, a little more and a little becomes a lot. Set yourself small daily or weekly targets.
- Regular exercises that challenge strength and balance can reduce your risk of a fall.
- If you are recovering from an illness you can regain lost strength with at least 2-3 sessions of strength activities a week. (1 week in bed can decrease your strength by 20%)

Other suggestions on moving more while at home:

- Use the stairs several times during the day, as long as you are safe to do so alone
- Go to bathroom upstairs rather than downstairs if you are safe to do so
- Place your phone or TV remote at the far end of the room so you have to get up to use it
- Stand up to take phone calls – if you can ‘walk and talk’

Simple Exercises from your HSE Physiotherapist for you to do

Follow the 8 daily exercises overleaf, then tick the boxes below when each session is completed. Please complete all 8 exercises twice daily (AM and PM).

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
	AM PM	AM PM	AM PM	AM PM
MON	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
TUES	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
WED	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
THURS	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
FRI	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
SAT	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
SUN	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Exercises that can be completed at home



1. Knee Strengthening

- Sit tall in a chair with your back well supported.
- Straighten your right leg fully and bring your toes up towards you.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Lower the leg slowly.
- Repeat up to 10 times - as you are able.

(If you have a 1kg weight at home you could strap this onto your ankle and you will get a greater benefit from this exercise)



2. Arm Strengthening

- Sitting tall.
- Hold a tin securely in each hand.
- Lift one arm over your head at a time.
- Replace onto your lap.
- Repeat up to 10 times - as you are able.



3. Sit to Stand

- Put your chair against the wall.
- Move your bottom forwards in your chair.
- Bring your feet behind your knees.
- Lean forwards bringing your head over your knees.
- Push off with both hands to stand up.
- Step back until you feel the chair against your legs.
- Bend in the middle, reaching back for the arm rests and slowly sit back down.
- Repeat up to 10 times - as you are able.

(When you get good at this exercise you can try to do it using just one hand or no hands to push yourself up)



4. Calf Raises

- Stand tall in front of your kitchen sink or the back of a sturdy chair.
- Hold on with both hands and look ahead.
- Place your feet hip width apart.
- Lift up onto your toes slowly.
- Lower your heels back onto the ground slowly.
- Repeat up to 10 times - as you are able.

Exercises that can be completed at home



5. Toe Raises

- Stand tall in front of your kitchen sink or the back of a sturdy chair.
- Hold on with both hands and look ahead.
- Keep your feet hip width apart.
- Place your weight onto the back of your foot
- Lift your toes and front of your feet off the ground.
- Keep your bottom tucked in.
- Lower your feet back to the ground slowly.
- Repeat up to 10 times - as you are able.



6. Hip Strengthening

- Stand tall in front of your kitchen sink or the back of a sturdy chair.
- Hold on with both hands.
- Keep the exercising leg straight and the foot facing straight forward.
- Lift the leg out to the side slowly.
- Return your leg to the starting position slowly.
- Repeat up to 10 times - as you are able.

(If you have a 1kg weight at home you could strap this onto your ankle and you will get a greater benefit from this exercise)



7. Balance Heel Toe Standing

- Hold onto a sturdy chair or your kitchen sink with two hands and look ahead.
- Place right foot directly in front of the left foot.
- Hold this position for 10 seconds.
- Change feet and hold for 10 seconds.



8. Balance One Leg Stand

- Hold on to heavy chair or kitchen sink with 2 hands and look straight ahead.
- Stand on your right leg.
- Hold for 10 seconds.
- Repeat on the left leg.

Congratulations! You've completed the 8 exercises. Don't forget to go to the front cover and tick the box!

Acknowledgement

This brochure is brought to you by PCC Physiotherapy Services Cork in partnership with:



Disclaimer

It is your responsibility to undertake these exercises safely. Cease performing these exercises if you experience pain or you feel unwell. The authors and advisors, who have created this brochure, accept no liability for injury caused as a result of participation in these exercises.

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Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists

RCSI, 121 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, D02 H903, Ireland.

T: +353 1 4022148 E: info@iscp.ie

www.iscp.ie



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