

Chair Exercises

Chair exercises are a great form of exercise for older adults, for those with disabilities, for people with poor balance, or for anyone else who has trouble standing or getting onto the floor to do exercise. Chair exercise can also be done in the office in the course of the workday when you need a little pick-me-up and as a handy way to work some activity into your day.

Chair exercises are gentle on the body and are generally safe for most people to do. It's always a good idea to talk to your doctor before beginning a new exercise program, but you're not likely to injure yourself doing any of these exercises.

All of the following chair exercises should be performed in a straight chair. Sit up straight in the chair with your feet flat on the floor, unless otherwise directed.

Neck Stretches

These simple neck stretches can relieve the tension of sitting at a computer all day.

1. Sit your arms hanging at your sides.
2. Tilt your head to the side, first one side, then the other.
3. Hold for a count of five on each side.

Arm and Shoulder Stretches

These stretches work your middle back as well as your arms and shoulders.

1. Interlace fingers and turn palms out.
2. Stretch your arms out in front of you at shoulder height.
3. Hold a count of five.

Quadriceps Contractions

This exercise works the front of your thighs.

1. Extend your legs, heels on the floor. Your knees should be straight.
2. Tighten your thigh muscles and hold for a count of 10.
3. Repeat this chair exercise 10 times.

Hamstring Contractions

This exercise works the back of your thighs.

1. Extend your legs, heels on the floor. Don't move your heels but pull back on them. You will feel tightness in your hamstrings.
2. Hold for a count of 10.
3. Repeat this chair exercise 10 times.

Hip Abductors

This exercise works your inner thighs.

1. Put your fists between your knees.
2. Squeeze your knees together.
3. Hold for a count of 10.
4. Repeat these chair exercises 10 times.

Full Back Release

This exercise stretches and relieves tensions in your entire back.

1. Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Slowly allow your neck, upper back, and lower back to curl forward. Move each part in turn. Allow your hands to touch the floor.
3. Hold for 10 seconds.
4. Straighten up slowly, first your lower back, then your upper back, then your neck, and last your head. Return to the starting position.