

## Exercises for older people

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### Sitting

#### 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](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

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## CHEST STRETCH



**This stretch is good for posture.**

**A.** Sit upright and away from the back of the chair. Pull your shoulders back and down. Extend arms out to the side.

**B.** Gently push your chest forwards and up until you feel a stretch across your chest.

Hold for five to 10 seconds and repeat five times.

## UPPER BODY TWIST



**This will develop and maintain flexibility in the upper back.**

**A.** Sit upright with feet flat on the floor, cross your arms and reach for your shoulders.

**B.** Without moving your hips, turn your upper body to the left as far as is comfortable.

Hold for five seconds. Repeat going right. Do five of each.

## HIP MARCHING



**This will strengthen hips and thighs and improve flexibility.**

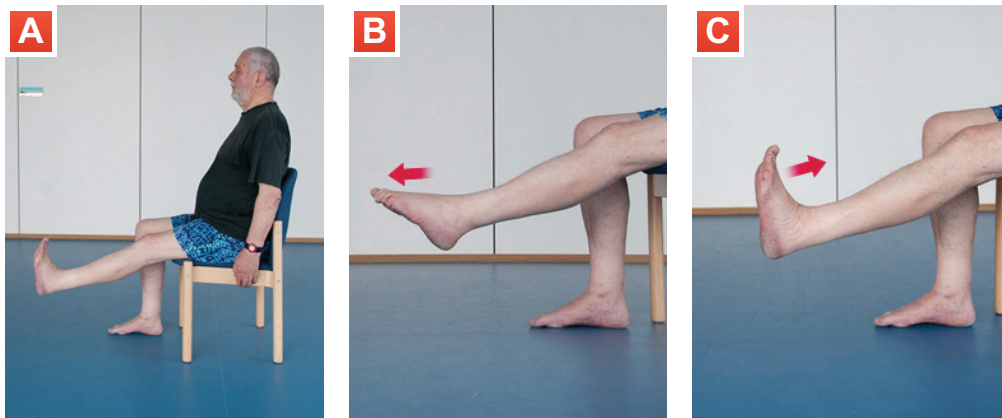
**A.** Sit upright and away from the back of the chair. Hold on to the sides of the chair.

**B.** Lift your left leg, with your knee bent, as far as is comfortable. Place foot down with control.

Repeat with the opposite leg. Do five lifts with each leg.



## ANKLE STRETCH

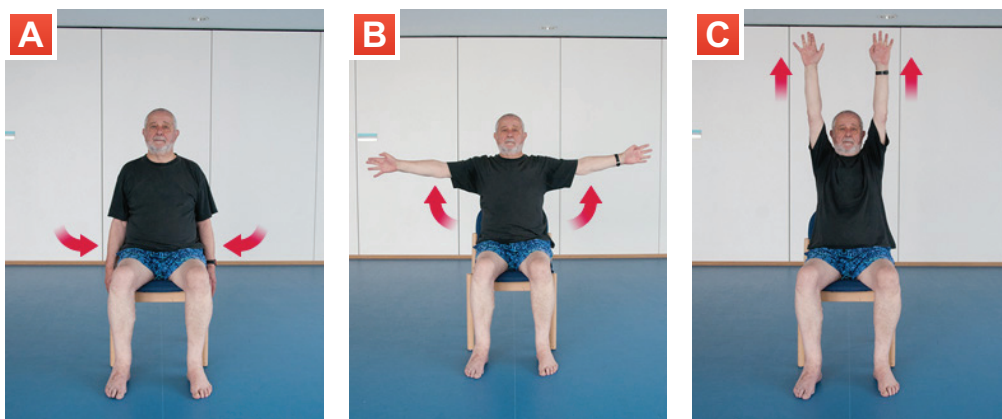


**This will improve ankle flexibility and reduce blood clot risk.**

- A. Sit upright, hold on to the side of the chair and straighten your left leg with your foot off the floor.
- B. With leg straight and raised, point your toes away from you.
- C. Point toes back towards you.

Try two sets of five stretches with each foot.

## ARM RAISES



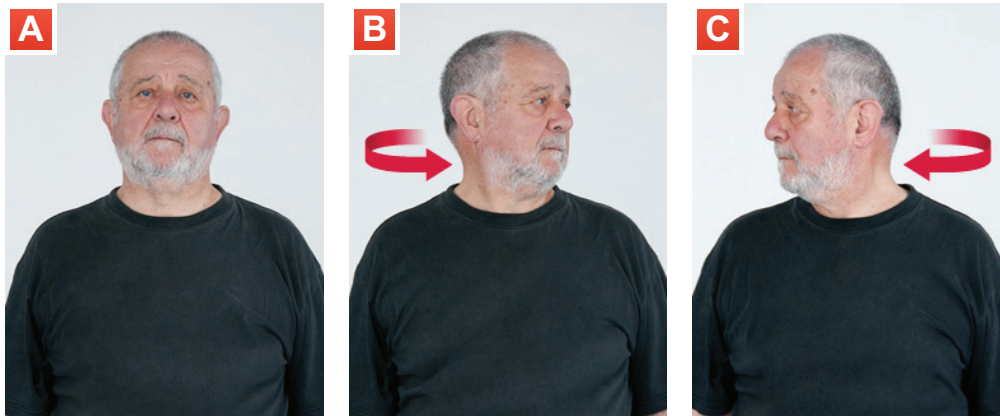
**This builds shoulder strength.**

- A. Sit upright, arms by your sides.
- B. With palms forwards, raise both arms out and to the side and up as far as is comfortable. Then return.
- C. Keep your shoulders down and arms straight throughout.

Breathe out as you raise your arms and breathe in as you lower them. Repeat five times.



## NECK ROTATION



**This stretch is good for improving neck mobility and flexibility.**

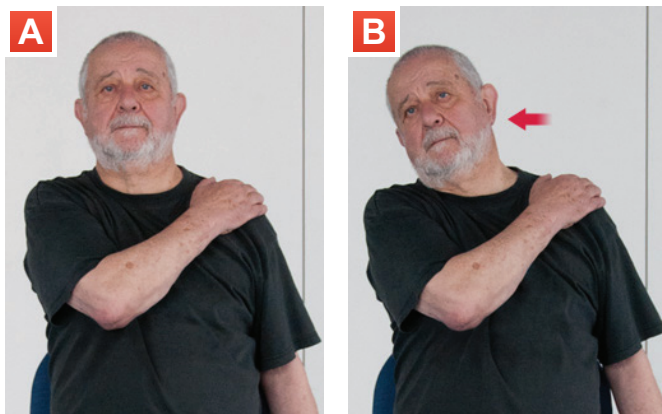
**A.** Sit upright with shoulders down. Look straight ahead.

**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.

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### Flexibility

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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.

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## NECK ROTATION



**This stretch is good for improving neck mobility and flexibility.**

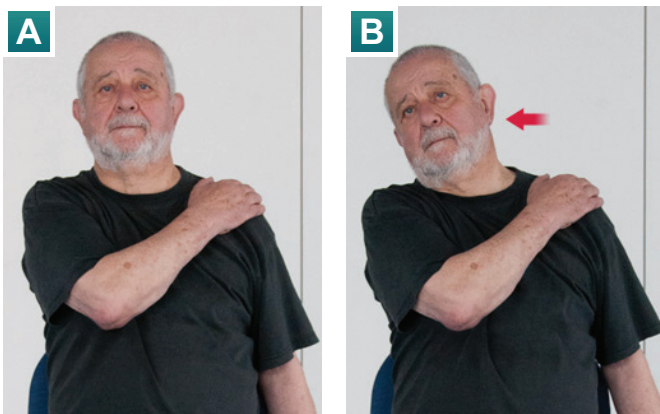
**A.** Sit upright with shoulders down. Look straight ahead.

**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.**

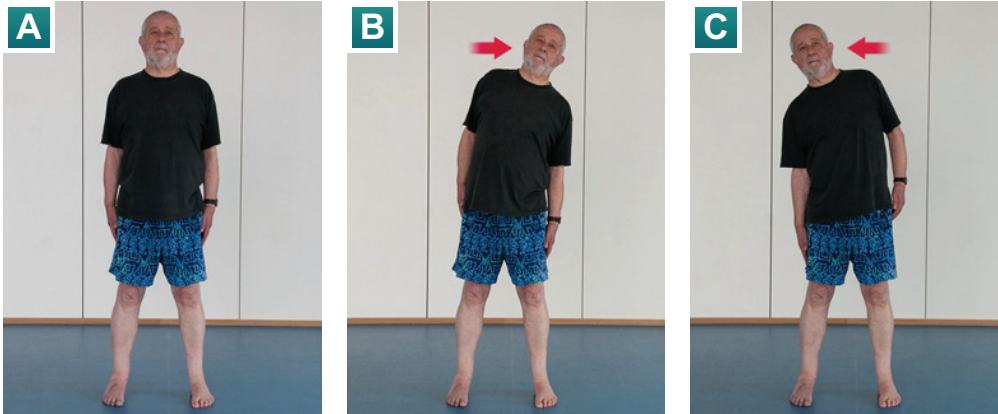
**A.** Sitting upright, look straight ahead and hold your left shoulder down with your right hand.

**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



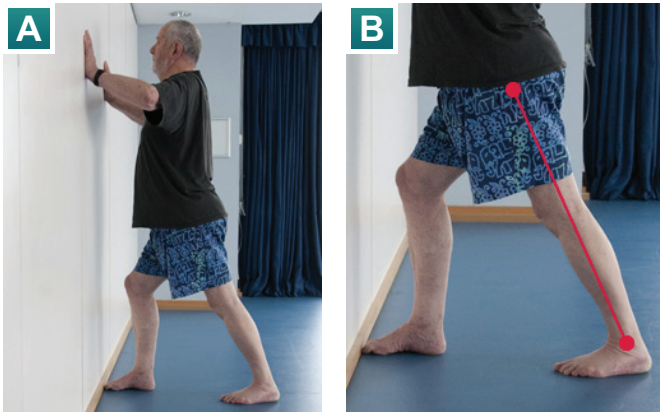
**A.** Stand upright with your feet hip-width apart and arms by your sides.

**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.

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### Strength

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Wear loose, comfortable clothing and keep some water handy.

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Build up slowly and aim to increase the repetitions of each exercise over time.

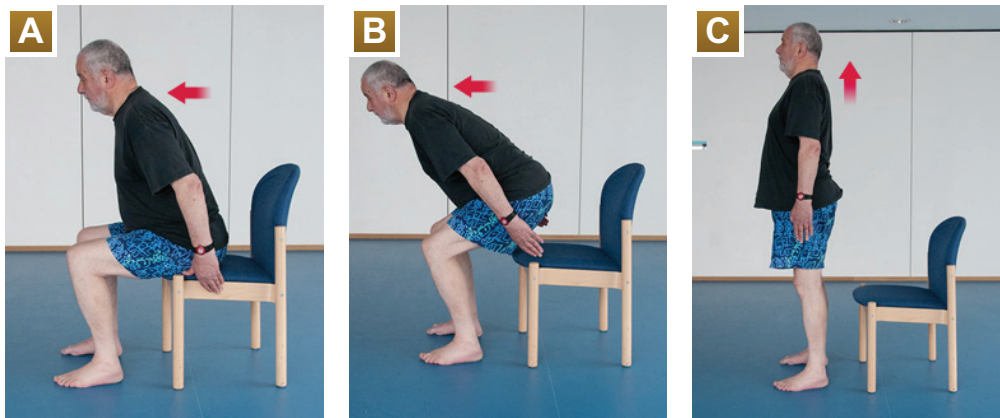
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## SIT TO STAND

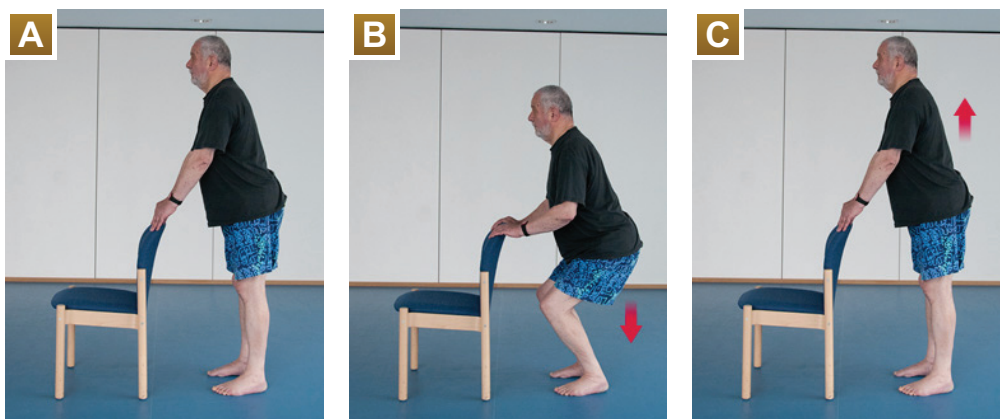


**This is good for leg strength.**

- A. Sit on the edge of the chair, feet hip-width apart. Lean slightly forwards.
- B. Stand up slowly, using your legs, not arms. Keep looking forwards, not down.
- C. Stand upright before slowly sitting down, bottom-first.

Aim for five repetitions - the slower the better.

## MINI SQUATS

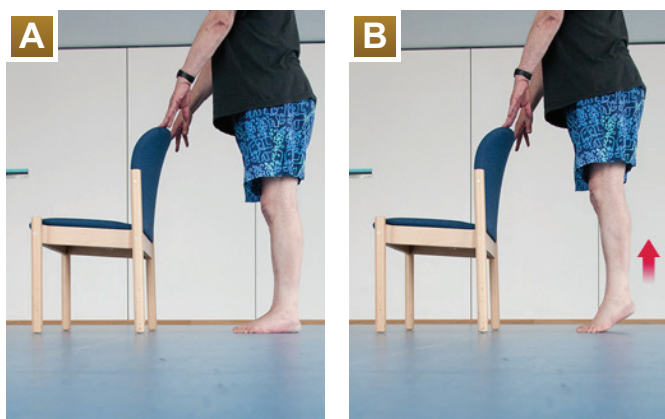


- A. Rest your hands on the back of the chair for stability and stand with your feet hip-width apart.
- B. Slowly bend your knees as far as is comfortable, keeping them facing forwards. Aim to get them over your big toe. Keep your back straight at all times.
- C. Gently come up to standing, squeezing your buttocks as you do.

Repeat five times.



## CALF RAISES

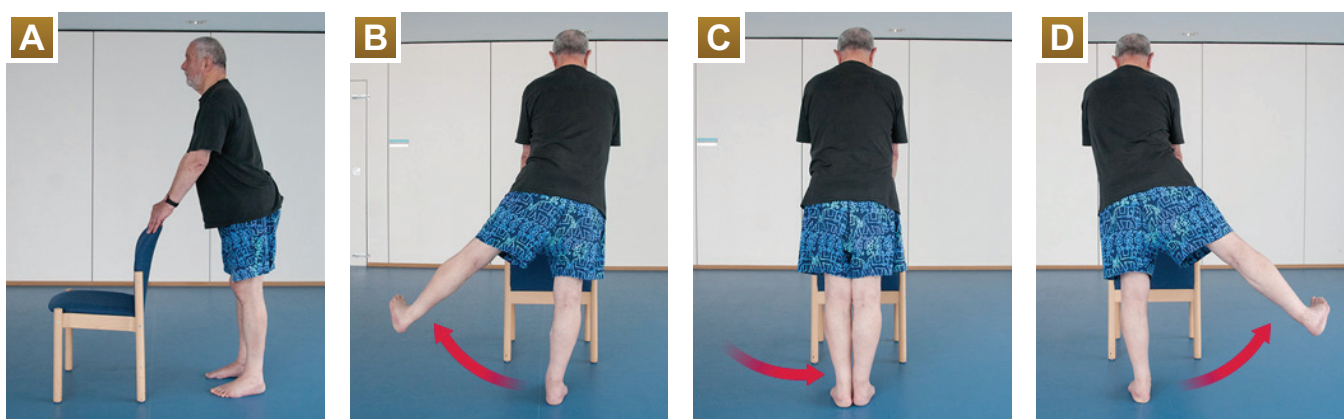


**A.** Rest your hands on the back of a chair for stability.

**B.** Lift both heels off the floor as far as is comfortable. The movement should be slow and controlled.

Repeat five times. For more difficulty, perform this exercise without support.

## SIDEWAYS LEG LIFT



**A.** Rest your hands on the back of a chair for stability.

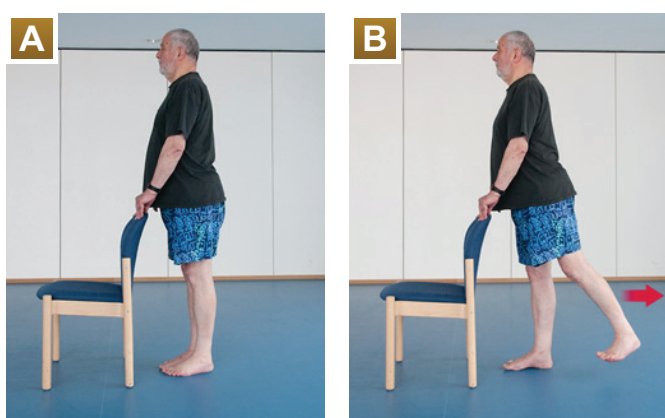
**B.** Raise your left leg to the side as far as is comfortable, keeping your back and hips straight. Avoid tilting to the right.

**C.** Return to the starting position.

**D.** Now raise your right leg to the side as far as possible.

Raise and lower each leg five times.

## LEG EXTENSION



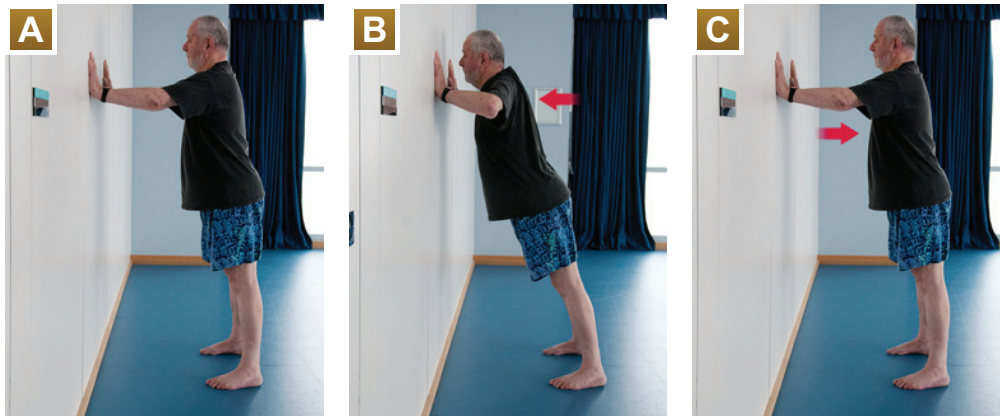
**A.** Rest your hands on the back of a chair for stability.

**B.** Standing upright, raise your left leg backwards, keeping it straight. Avoid arching your back as you take your leg back. You should feel the effort in the back of your thigh and bottom. Repeat with the other leg.

Hold the lift for up to five seconds and repeat five times with each leg.



## WALL PRESS UP



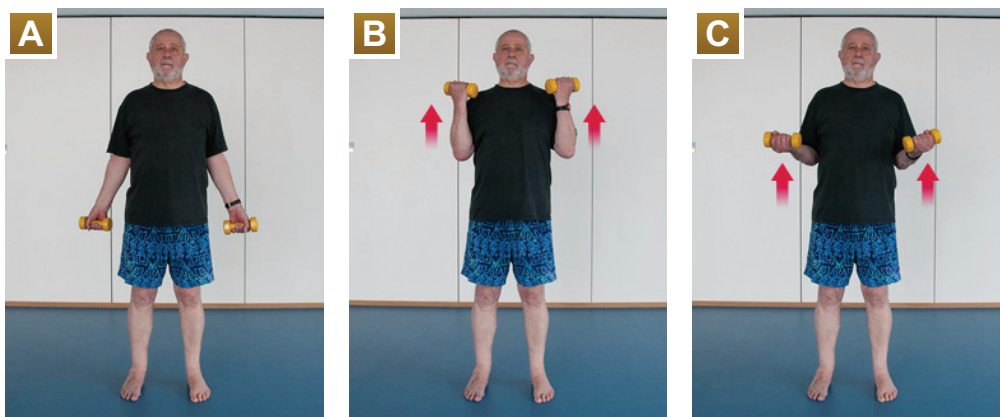
**A.** Stand at arm's length from the wall. Place your hands flat against the wall, at chest level, with fingers pointing upwards.

**B.** With back straight, slowly bend your arms, keeping elbows by your side. Aim to close the gap between you and the wall as much as you can.

**C.** Slowly return to the start.

Attempt three sets of 5–10 repetitions.

## BICEP CURLS



**A.** Hold a pair of light weights (filled water bottles will do) and stand with your feet hip-width apart.

**B.** Keeping your arms by your side, slowly bend them until the weight in your hand reaches your shoulder.

**C.** Lower again slowly.

This can also be carried out while sitting. Attempt three sets of five curls with each arm.

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### Balance

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## SIDEWAYS WALKING



- A.** Stand with your feet together, knees slightly bent.
- B.** Step sideways in a slow and controlled manner, moving one foot to the side first.
- C.** Move the other to join it.

Avoid dropping your hips as you step. Perform 10 steps each way or step from one side of the room to the other.

## SIMPLE GRAPEVINE



**This involves walking sideways by crossing one foot over the other.**

- A.** Start by crossing your right foot over your left.
- B.** Bring your left foot to join it.

Attempt five cross steps on each side.

If necessary, put your fingers against a wall for stability.

The smaller the step, the more you work on your balance.

## HEEL TO TOE WALK



**A.** Standing upright, place your right heel on the floor directly in front of your left toe.

**B.** Then do the same with your left heel. Make sure you keep looking forwards at all times.

If necessary, put your fingers against a wall for stability.

Try to perform at least five steps. As you progress, move away from the wall.



## ONE LEG STAND



**A.** Start by standing facing the wall, with arms outstretched and your fingertips touching the wall.

**B.** Lift your left leg, keep your hips level and keep a slight bend in the opposite leg. Gently place your foot back on the floor.

Hold the lift for five to 10 seconds and perform three on each side.

## STEP UP



**Use a step, preferably with a railing or near a wall to use as support.**

**A.** Step up with your right leg.

**B.** Bring your left leg up to join it.

**C.** Step down again and return to the start position.

The key for building balance is to step up and down slowly and in a controlled manner. Perform up to five steps with each leg.