Walking Scotland

Your national walking and wheeling charity

Improving your Strength and Balance

Simple movements to help adults stay active, walk well and lead independent lives



Doing the 10 movements in this leaflet at least twice a week in addition to regular walking can help keep you strong and balanced. This can help adults of any age to become more active, and self-manage long-term health conditions.

You can do the movements as part of your everyday routine – for example, try some knee bends while waiting for the kettle to boil, or do the sit to stand exercise during the advert breaks on television.



Keep safe while moving

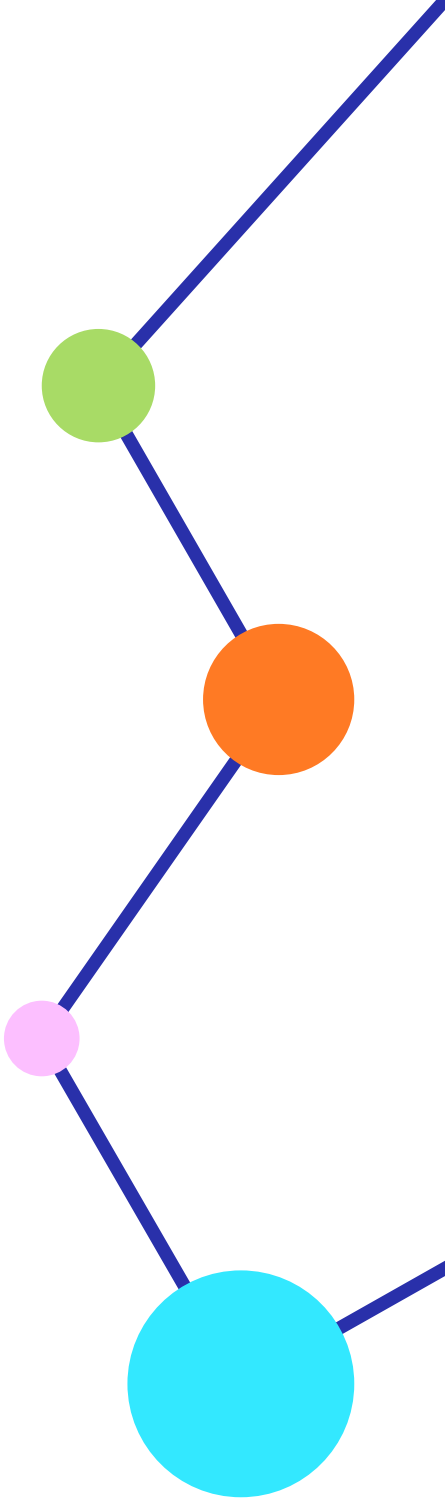
It is important to listen to how your body feels while moving and stop if you experience anything that does not feel right to you.

Strength and Balance exercises can make your muscles feel more tense than usual – they might shake a little and feel warmer – **this is normal when doing these activities**. Seek medical advice if you experience dizziness, chest pain, shortness of breath or muscle pain that does not go away.

If you have been under medical care recently, it is sensible to check with your doctor or nurse before you start something new.

If you are not sure about your balance, find something stable to hold onto.

Always make sure the floor is clear of things that might trip you up. Wear comfortable flat shoes.



Let’s get started!

Try to do the movements in this leaflet twice a week.



Movement 1: Back Knee Strength

This movement can help strengthen your hamstrings. This can help when climbing stairs, walking and standing up from a chair.

1. Stand up tall and look ahead, hold on to a support if needed.
2. Bending one knee, lift your foot slowly towards your bottom.
3. Gently lower your foot back to the ground.
4. Carefully build up the number of repetitions on each leg.



This movement can be done from a seated position.

Movement 2: Knee Bends

This movement will strengthen the big muscles in your hips and thighs and will improve your balance. This can help when climbing stairs, walking or bending to speak to someone.

1. Hold on to a support if needed, and look straight ahead. Place your feet hip width apart.
2. Bend your knees slightly.
3. Slowly return to a standing position, keeping your back straight.
4. Carefully build up the number of repetitions.



A seated alternative could be seated marching.

Movement 3: Toe Raises

This strengthens lower leg muscles. This can make it easier to step backwards, keep balance and lift your feet over obstacles.

1. Hold on to a support if needed, and look straight ahead. Place your feet hip width apart.
2. Slowly raise your toes off the ground, leaning slightly back on your heels.
3. Lower your toes back down.
4. Carefully build up the number of repetitions.



This movement can be done from a seated position.

Movement 4: Heel Raises

This movement strengthens your calf muscles and toe joints. It can help you manage everyday activities such as hanging out washing or reaching up into high cupboards.

1. Hold on to a support if needed, and look straight ahead. Place your feet hip width apart.
2. Slowly raise your heels off the ground.
3. Lower your heels back down.
4. Carefully build up the number of repetitions.



This movement can be done from a seated position.

Movement 5: Side Hip Strength

This strengthens your hip muscles and can help you with stepping up onto pavements or kerbs.

1. Stand up tall and look ahead. Use a support if you need it.
2. Slowly lift one leg out to the side.
   Keep toes and hips facing forward.
3. Gently lower your foot back to the ground.
4. Carefully build up the number of repetitions on each leg.



A seated alternative could be seated marching.

Movement 6: Sideways Walking

This movement strengthens your hip and thigh muscles.
This is good for moving in a sideways direction, for example stepping out of the way on a pavement to allow someone to pass.

1. Stand up tall and look ahead. Use a support if you need it.
2. Take a few side steps and pause.
3. Take a few side steps back to the start. Now try the other side.
4. Carefully build up the number of repetitions on each side.

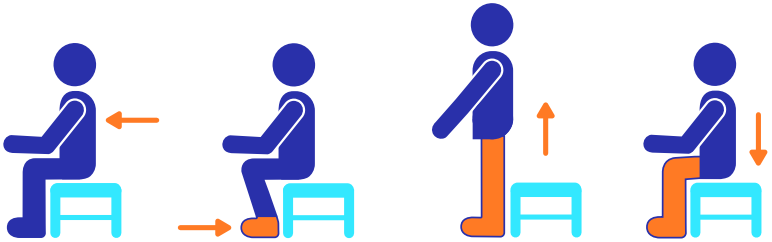


Seated alternative: Tap foot out to side and back to centre, then out to the other side.

Movement 7: Sit to Stand

This is designed to help you get in and out of a chair easily and will strengthen lower body muscles and core stability.

1. Slowly shuffle forward towards the edge of your seat.
2. Put your feet flat on the ground, then slide them back slightly.
3. Looking straight ahead, push up to a standing position. Try not to use your arms.
4. Ensure your legs are touching the seat. With control, sit back down. Carefully build up the number of repetitions.



Movement 8: Front Knee Strength

This movement strengthens the large muscles in your thighs that help you stand up and sit down. This will help with walking and climbing stairs.

1. Sit upright with your heels tucked in.
2. Point your toes upward and lift your leg slightly off the ground.
3. Slowly lower your leg back down.
4. Carefully build up the number of repetitions on each leg.



Movement 9: Arm Curls

This movement strengthens your biceps and helps with activities such as carrying shopping or lifting objects.

1. Sit upright and look straight ahead.
2. Place your hands on your lap, palms upward. Keep your elbows close to your sides throughout.
3. Lift your hands slowly towards your shoulders.
4. Slowly lower your hands. Carefully build up the number of repetitions.

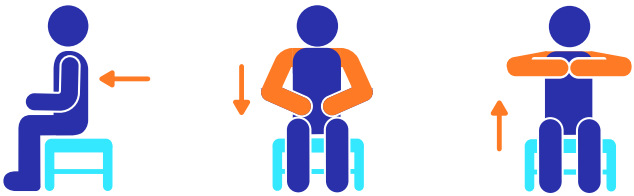


This movement can be done from a standing position.

Movement 10: Upright Pull

This can strengthen muscles in the upper back and help when opening heavy doors, carrying shopping, balance and posture.

1. Sit upright and look straight ahead.
2. Place your hands down in front of you with your palms facing towards you.
3. Slowly pull your hands upwards, bending your elbows until level with your shoulders.
4. Slowly lower your hands. Carefully build up the number of repetitions.



This movement can be done from a standing position.

Walking tips

Building up your Strength and Balance can help you to walk well. Regular walking can contribute to good physical and mental health. Walking with others can improve your social health. Here are some top tips:



Join your local Health Walk – you can find this on the Walking Scotland website.

If you are concerned about your balance, walk further rather than faster.





Stand tall and pull in your stomach while you walk to improve your posture. This also strengthens the muscles round your tummy and back.

Start slowly and listen to your body, build up your walking pace as you feel more able.



Try to swing your arms as you walk. This helps you to avoid shuffling.

Walking Scotland

Your national walking and wheeling charity

Thank you to all who have contributed to the development of these resources.

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