

# Chair-based exercises - anyone can do

All care home residents can gain the benefits of exercise, even if they are unable to stand or move about easily. Here, *Repose Furniture* occupational therapist Kate Sheehan offers some chair-based mobility exercises that all residents can enjoy

## It all starts with posture

Having a good posture for exercise is instrumental in keeping yourself fit and it ensures you benefit from each exercise. Good posture also prevents unwanted strain such as backache or muscular pain during exercise. It also means that your body can work efficiently as your bones are in alignment which allows your muscles, ligaments, tendons and joints to work correctly.

## To start: in your seat:

- Sit nice and tall
- Head neutral, looking straight forward, ears over shoulders (not forward, back or to the side). Shoulders should be relaxed, back and down
- Lower back flat against the back of the chair (your bottom should touch the backrest)
- Palms of hands flat on either thighs or arm rests of the chair
- Knees should be slightly lower than the hips with a gap between the back of the knees and chair
- Feet flat on floor at a right angle to your knees, toes facing forward and do not cross the legs or feet
- Please be aware that one side may be stronger than the other when completing these exercises
- Complete each exercise to a point that you feel comfortable, never push beyond this point.

## Mobility exercises



### Hip & leg mobility

Exercise: **Seated marching**

- Hands on thighs, raise knees to at least hip height and march
- Sit up tall, keeping your hands on your thighs, raise each knee in turn to as high as you can comfortably go
- Initially complete 10 on each side, as you become stronger increase your repetitions.

### Repetitions:

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
20 alternate knee lifts (10 each side) or 20-30 seconds	20 alternate knee lifts (10 each side) Or 30-45 seconds	30 alternate knee lifts, or 45 – 60 seconds
Notes: Lift knee to at least waist height	Notes: Use arms at low height	Notes: use full arm swinging so marching

Notes:

To avoid shifting your weight you should utilise your core strength and contract your bellybutton towards your spine to give extra stability.

### Wrist mobility

Exercise: **Wrist raises**

Rest forearms on your thighs with a wide stance or arm rests of a chair with palms facing down

Keeping the arm still and with fingers outstretched raise your fingers towards the ceiling from the wrist as far as possible and relax back down

Add an arm curl by raising your hand towards you shoulder once you reach advanced.

Exercise: **Wrist raises reverse**

Rest forearms on your thighs with a wide stance or arm rests of a chair with palms facing upwards

Keeping the arm still and with fingers outstretched raise your fingers towards the ceiling from the wrist as far as possible and relax back

At the advanced stage add an arm curl by raising your hand towards your shoulder once.

### Repetitions:

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Five wrist raises and then five reverse wrist raises (repeat three times)	Eight wrist raises with arm curl and eight reverse wrist raises (repeat three times)	10 wrist raise and arm curl and 10 reverse with arm curl keeping elbows tucked in to the body (repeat three times) Add band for additional resistance

Notes:

When comfortable you can add a resistance band to the wrist raise and arm curls



**Waist and trunk mobility**

Exercise: **Stretch and rotate**

Sit up tall, interlock your fingers and raise them to shoulder height in front of you, rotate as far right as you can go and then as far left as you can go, making sure you keep the head faces forward

Always stop in the middle before going to the alternative side. Initially complete five on each side, as you become stronger increase your repetitions.

**Repetitions:**

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Five back rotations (right to left)	Five back rotations (right to left)	10 back rotations (right to left)
Notes: Grasp hands in front at comfortable height. Rotate back so your clasped hands are over each knee	Notes: Grasp hands in front at comfortable height. Rotate back so your clasped hands pass over each knee to increase the rotation	Notes: Grasp hands in front at shoulder height. Push hands forward and extend your back to increase the back stretch. Rotate back so your clasped hands pass over each knee or to the armrest on chair to increase the rotation

**Notes:**

Push your hands as far forward as you can without straining the back, keep your head neutral and looking forward.



Time for side bends?  
Read on for step-by-step help with this exercise

Exercise: **Side bend**

Start with sliding your arm as low as you can down to one side of your body.

Keeping your head and neck in-line with your spine  
Make sure you do not lean forwards or backwards.

**Repetitions**

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Five side bends (right & left)	Eight side bends (right & left)	10 side bends (right & left)
Notes: reach down as far as you can comfortably to feel the stretch	Notes: slide your fingers as close to the floor as possible	Notes: reach your right arm up in the air and then bend to your left reaching as far over the side as possible.

**Notes:**

As flexibility improves, increase the number of repetitions and the range of motion.



**Chest and back mobility**

Exercise: **Push and pull**

Keep arms straight out shoulder height, palms down parallel to the floor

Reach as far forward as comfortably possible, shrug shoulders forward slightly

Lead with the elbows as the arms are pulled back, retract shoulder blades as arms are pulled back

Keep neck in a neutral position and eyes looking forward.

**Repetitions:**

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Eight push and pulls	12 – 15 push and pulls	20 push and pulls
Notes: keep arms in line with shoulders	Notes: increase range of motion all way forward and back	Notes: increase the range of motion and the speed of movement

**Notes:**

Keep control through the movement as you increase the range of motion and the speed.

## Ankle mobility

### Exercise: Toe raise

Keeping the heel on the floor gently raise the toes upwards to a point that is comfortable. Lower the toes back to the floor.

### Exercise: Heel raise

Keeping the toes on the floor gently raise the heels upwards to a point that is comfortable. Lower the heels back to the floor.

### Repetitions:

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
10 toe raises each leg 10 heel raises each leg	10 toe to heel raises: One foot or both	15 - 20 toe to heel raises both feet
Notes: Hands on thighs with good posture	Notes: Hands on thighs or armrests with good posture	Notes: Hands off with good posture

### Notes:

Start at the beginner level and work your way up if comfortable to advanced by completing each stage at least five times before advancing to the next level.



## Stretching

### Exercise: Hamstring stretch

Sit forward. If you need help with balance hold onto the chair

Place one leg out in front of you on the heel as straight as possible

Keep your back flat and bend from the hips

You should feel the stretch down the back of the thigh. Hold stretch for 10 – 20 seconds

Repeat five times each side initially and build up to 10, increasing your bend forwards as you become more confident

Try to support weight by placing hands on the opposite thigh.



# Adaptable and versatile healthcare seating



## Delivering care and comfort from hospitals to homes

### Our Portering and Riser Recline chairs come with:

- Bespoke options
- A choice of pressure management cushions
- Postural management back styles
- A range of specialist fabrics & colours



For more information call us or visit our website:

[www.reposefurniture.co.uk](http://www.reposefurniture.co.uk)

Tel: 01384 567401

