

Seated Exercises

Information for Patients



Seated Exercise

These exercises are designed to allow you to exercise and keep your joints moving and strong whilst you maybe using a wheelchair. They can all be done in sitting in either a wheelchair, normal chair or whilst sitting on the edge of the bed. You do not need any special equipment other than a towel and a light hand weight (a drinks bottle will do!). Posture is important as you work your postural muscles whilst exercising and if you are sat in a wheelchair for some time these muscles tend to get weak and tight quickly, meaning you can become 'chair shaped'. Try to think about your posture throughout the exercises, sit up tall and make sure you do not lean on the back of the chair. It is important that none the following exercises should cause you any pain. If they do, stop that exercise and tell the person who taught them to you.

1) Chair Marching - this is an excellent exercise for your postural muscles.

- Sit up tall on a chair or the bed with your hands resting on your hips. Do not lean against the back of the chair.
- March on the spot by lifting each leg slightly off the bed/chair. Try to keep your back tall and do not let yourself tilt side to side or lean backwards.
- After 10 to 20 stepping movements rest and then repeat.
- To make this more difficult try to add in your arms moving them forwards and backwards with the elbows bent as if you are marching. If possible try to move opposite leg to arm ie left leg and right arm together.
- _____ sets.



2) Side stretch - these muscles get tight quickly when you have had an amputation.

- Sit down straight with your head and shoulders facing forward.
- Lift you left arm overhead and place your right hand on your hip or on the arm of the chair.
- Lean over carefully to the right. Pull up out of your waist, making sure both buttocks stay firmly on the seat. You should feel a stretch down your left side.
- Repeat 3- 5 times on each side.



3) Hamstring stretch - these muscles also get tight if you are sitting a lot.

- Sit in a chair with your back straight. Lift your bottom slightly forwards in the chair.
- Stretch your remaining leg out in front of you without locking your knee. Either rest your heel on the floor or on a small stool or step if one is available.
- Lean forward from the hips, keeping your spine straight, not rounded.
- Hold the position for 10-15 when you feel a comfortable stretch behind your thigh. Repeat 3 -5 times on your remaining leg.



4) Shoulder circles backwards - think about your posture - we all tend to be round shouldered!

- Sit comfortably up tall. Do not lean on the back of the chair.
- Keep your hands and arms relaxed on your thighs.
- Slowly roll your shoulders backwards in a circle.
- Repeat 10 times.
- _____ sets.



The next 5 exercises are very good for strengthening your arms:

5) Wheelchair push ups

- Sit on a chair with armrests with your foot flat on the ground.
- Push with your arms on the armrest to lift your bottom off the chair. (Think about taking your head up to the ceiling and feel the weight on your arms).
- Hold this position for a count of 2 then slowly lower your bottom back to the chair, controlling the movement with your arms.
- While doing this exercise, avoid putting too much weight on your feet because the exercise is meant to work the arms.
- Repeat 10 times.
- _____ sets.



6) Bicep curls

- Sit comfortably in a chair.
- Hold a light weight in one hand. This could be something simple like a drinks bottle.
- Turn your hand so the thumb faces the ceiling.
- Slowly bend your elbow taking the weight towards your shoulder.
- Then slowly straighten your arm so you put the weight back on your lap.
- Try to keep your elbow into your side throughout the exercise.
- Repeat 10 times each side.
- _____ sets.



7) Arm exercise with a towel

- Hold a towel with both hands.
- Pull upwards with one hand and downwards with the other as if you are trying to pull the towel apart.
- Hold for 5 seconds then relax.
- Make sure you keep your arms close to your body during the exercise.
- Repeat 10 times.
- Swap your hands over and repeat the other way.
- 2 - 3 sets as able.





8) Boxing

- Sit up tall do not lean on the back of your chair.
- Make a fist with each hand and raise them in front of your chest.
- Straighten one arm out in front of you keeping your fist closed.
- Bring this arm back into your side and repeat with the other as if you are slowly boxing.
- Repeat for 10 – 20 reps and then relax. Do some more sets if you can.

HINT! To make it more difficult hold a light weight in each hand but don't forget to sit up tall.

9) Boxing Speedball

- Sit up tall do not lean on the back of your chair.
- Make two fists lift them up level with your nose.
- Practise circling your fists around each other forwards whilst you count to 20. Make sure you keep sitting tall.
- Then circle your fists backwards around each other whilst you count to 20.
- Rest. Repeat if able.
- _____ sets.



Spending a lot of time sitting means our back muscles get weak and tight. These two exercises are good for stretching and strengthening them.

10) Back stretches

- Sit with your weight evenly distributed on your sitbones.
- Place hands on your lower back or hips.
- Sit up as tall as you can, arching your back and squeeze your shoulder blades and elbows towards each other.
- Hold for count of 5 then relax.
- _____ sets.



11) Lower back mobility - sit slightly forwards in the chair so your back is not supported.

- Sit up as tall as you can so you arch your lower back.
- Then slump as much as you can so you flatten your back towards the back of the chair.
- Repeat 5 times. Rest repeat again if you can.
- _____ sets.

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