

WALK YOUR WAY TO BETTER STRENGTH AND BALANCE

paths
for all



A set of simple exercises for adults who want to live life to the full!

Doing the 10 simple exercises in this leaflet at least twice a week in addition to taking a daily walk can help keep you strong and balanced – reducing the risk of falls. It can help people of any age living with long term conditions to become more active and to self manage their condition.

You can do the exercises 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.

“My balance has improved and I can now pick up my feet with ease”

John, (Grangemouth walking group)

Keep safe while exercising

It is important to listen to how your body feels while exercising and stop if you experience anything that does not feel right to you. It is also useful that you know that 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 however if you experience dizziness, chest pain, shortness of breath or muscle pain that does not go away. As with other exercise programmes, it is sensible to check with your doctor or nurse before you start on something new.

If you are not sure about your balance, find something stable to hold onto while doing the exercises, especially those that are marked with this symbol. Always make sure the floor is clear of things that might trip you up. Wear comfortable flat shoes while exercising and walking.



These exercises can help you improve your strength and balance which in turn helps you to stay active and independent in your everyday life.

Try and do the exercises in this leaflet twice a week.

Walking every day will help you keep active and healthy and is a great way to get out and about and meet people. Walking is often described by Health Professionals as the perfect exercise!

Every step counts – try and walk for 10 minutes 3 times a day, or 15 minutes twice a day, building up to a 30 minute daily walk if you can.

The more activity you do, the better you'll feel. Make a start today, it's never too late!

Paths for All is the charity that champions everyday walking in Scotland.

For more information about Paths for All, or to find a Health Walk in your local area visit our website.

We also have a set of 4 exercises specifically for frailer older adults. To find out more, visit: www.pathsforall.org.uk/strength

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THE BACK KNEE STRENGTHENER:

02

Do this one standing in front of a bench or table.

Stand up tall and bend one knee, bringing your foot **slowly** towards your bottom. Hold for a low count of 3. Keep the knee of the bent leg slightly behind the knee of the straight leg.

Return to the starting position slowly.

Again, try this 5 times on each side at first and build up to 10 times with each leg.



SIT TO STAND:

04

This exercise is designed to help you get in and out of your chair easily.

Sit on a chair that is not too low. Move forward into the front third of the chair. Put your feet flat on the floor, then slide them back slightly.

Lean forward over your knees keeping your head and shoulders high and push up through your heels to a standing position. Try not to use your arms, just your legs.

Sit back down and then **slowly** repeat 5 times, building up to 10.



Let's get started with the exercises

If you are prone to sore knees, start with only a few repetitions of exercise 1, 2 and 3 and build up slowly.

THE FRONT KNEE STRENGTHENER:

01

You can try this exercise while you are sitting in a chair - try this while you are watching TV!

Straighten your leg out, lift an inch, hold for a slow count of 3 and then slowly lower it again.

Try this 5 times with one leg, then another 5 with the other leg. Build up to 10 times per leg. You can progress further by sitting away from the back of the chair, keeping a straight back.

Exercise 1 & 2 strengthen the large muscles in your thighs that help you stand up and sit down. This will help with walking and with climbing stairs.



KNEE BENDS:

03

Stand facing the bench or table as before.

Place your feet shoulder width apart. Bend your knees and squat down by about 10cm (4") by bending your knees. Come up and repeat. Keep your back straight and don't let your knees extend over your toes.

This exercise 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.

Try this exercise 5 times and build up to 10 repetitions as you get stronger. You could also hold the squat for a few seconds.



CALF RAISES WITH SUPPORT:

05

Stand facing the bench or table as before.

Hold on and look straight ahead.

Position your feet hip width apart. Slowly and with control come up onto your toes, hold for a slow count of 3 and lower your heels back down.

Repeat this exercise 5 times, building up to 10 or more. As your balance improves, try holding on with just one hand or fingertips.

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



TOE RAISES WITH SUPPORT:

06

Stand tall beside a bench or table.

Hold on and look ahead. Your feet should be hip width apart. Come back onto your heels, raising the front of your feet off the floor, then lower your toes back to the ground. Don't let your body hinge at the hips, keep the body as straight as possible.

Repeat this exercise 5 times and build up to 10 or more. As your balance improves, try holding on with just one hand or fingertips.

This strengthens your lower leg muscles and will make it easier for you to step backwards, or do fun things like push your grandchildren on the swings!



SIDEWAYS WALKING:

08

Stand up tall and place your hands on your hips.

Use a support in front of you if needed such as a wall or railing. Take 10 steps to the right, pause and then take 10 steps to the left.

This exercise is good for moving in a sideways direction, for example stepping out of the way on a pavement to allow someone past.



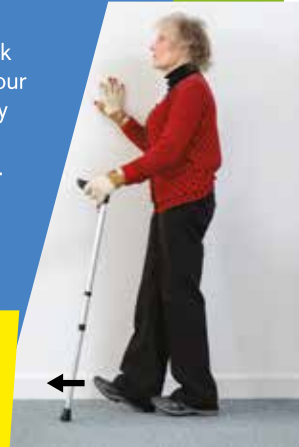
HEEL WALKING WITH NO SUPPORT:

10

Use side support if required, such as a wall or railing.

Stand tall and look ahead. Come back onto your heels, raising the front of your feet off the floor. Make sure your body stays nice and straight and you don't lean forward or stick out your bottom.

Walk 10 steps on your heels. Lower the feet to the ground, turn around and take 10 steps back on your heels the other way as before.



SIDE HIP STRENGTHENER:

07

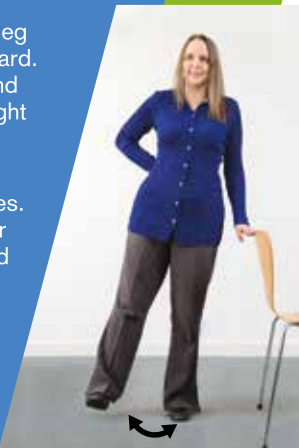
Stand tall beside a bench or table.

Hold on and keep your exercising leg straight, with the foot straight forward. Slowly lift the leg out to the side and return. Try and keep the body upright and only move the leg, rather than swinging over to the side.

Repeat 5 times, build up to 10 times. Swap round and exercise the other leg. Lift the leg out to the side, hold for a slow count of 3 and return.

Try to keep the body upright and only move the leg, rather than the top part of your body.

This strengthens your hip muscles and helps you with stepping up over pavements or kerbs.



TOE WALKING WITH NO SUPPORT:

09

Use side support if required, such as a wall or railing.

Stand up tall and look ahead. Come up on your toes slowly. Walk 10 steps on your toes, then lower your heels back down and turn around.

Walk 10 steps the other way on your toes. Toe and heel walking can help improve balance when reaching up, for example into high cupboards or supermarket shelves.



Walking Tips

Wear flat and comfortable footwear with a good grip on the sole

When taking steps, push off on your toes and then land back down onto your heels

Try and swing your arms as you walk – this helps you to avoid shuffling

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

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

How should I feel?

Try to walk steadily so that you feel a little warmer and feel your heart beating a bit faster – this is normal when doing these activities. Walk at a pace so that you can still talk to the person next to you!