



SIT-SIT GETTING FIT



GUEST CORNER

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We lose muscle mass as we age so it's important to maintain our strength and mobility to improve our quality of life.

Chair exercises are an excellent way to build strength and improve mobility without putting too much strain on your body.

BENEFITS OF CHAIR EXERCISES.

1. It provides a **highly accessibility** workout option enabling individuals with limited mobility or those recovering from injury or surgery to engage in physical activity safely and comfortably.
2. It is an effective way to **improve strength**, build muscle tone and enhance overall physical stability, while minimizing strain on joints that help to improve your gait, negotiate stairs safer and get up from a low couch.
3. **Seated stretches** offer a convenient and safe way to improve joint mobility and decrease stiffness.
4. Improving your core and pelvic strength helps in overall **postural awareness and balance** that reduces the risk of falls.
5. Certain chair exercises can elevate heart rate, contribute to **cardiovascular health** without the impact of high-intensity workouts.
6. Physical activity releases mood-boosting chemicals like dopamine and endorphins, reduce anxiety and improve overall cognitive function and **mental wellbeing**.
7. It can be an integral **part of rehabilitation** to regain strength and mobility after surgery or an injury.
8. Movement increases circulation which helps to deliver oxygen and nutrients to injured tissues to **promote healing and reduce pain**.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS.

You don't need a special chair for chair exercises, sturdy armless chairs are best. If your chair is sitting on a smooth surface, you may need to back it up to a wall so it can't slip. Never hold your breath and repeat all exercises both sides.

SAMPLE CHAIR EXERCISE ROUTINE.

Warm up: 5-10 min. Start slowly and speed up as you master the move.

- **Seated Jack:** This is a cardio exercise that also gets your mind and coordination working. Sit on the seat of a chair with your torso upright, away from the back of the chair. Start with your arms

close against your body. Step both feet out to the sides with legs out in open "V" while opening your arms upward in a second "V" (in a jumping jack motion). Squeeze your shoulder blades and glutes together to return to starting position. If moving both arms and legs are too difficult, do separately.

- **Cross body crunches:** Sit on edge of the chair. Bring one knee up to the opposite elbow, then open chest and arm sideways as you put foot down.

Strengthening:

- **Neck:** Sit up straight and roll both shoulders backwards in a slow circular motion. At same time turn your head slowly from side to side.
- **Shoulders/Torso:** Stretch right arm over your head and lean your body sideways to the left. As you get stronger hold light weights in your hands.
- **Hips/Core:** Sit near the edge of your chair and straighten one leg in front of you, toes pointed up. Grip the seat of the chair with your hands, raise the leg off the floor. Lift leg as high as possible and hold 3-5 sec.
- **Core/Posture:** Sit upright lengthening your spine up to the ceiling and lift your ribcage away from your stomach. Breathe deeply in and out from the belly, with each exhale suck your belly button to your spine keeping the posture upright. Your breath should be deep enough to expand the stomach and chest.
- **Knees/Ankles:** Sit upright and straighten one leg up in air in front of you. Keep your thigh tight and do 5 circles outward with your ankle.
- **Sit to stand:** This is functional exercise. Sit forward in a chair with your feet under you about shoulder-width apart. Lean slightly forward with your back straight and slowly stand up, extending the arms forward for balance. Reverse the motion and sit down, using the hands to locate the seat of the chair if you need to.

Stretches:

- **Chair Cat-Cow Stretch:** Sit upright, tuck your chin down to your chest then curve chest down, tucking pelvis and tailbone under as you exhale, then slowly unfold, inhale as you stick your pelvis out, lifting your ribcage up away from your stomach.
- **Hamstring back stretch:** Straighten one leg out in front of you, keep the heel on the ground. Exhale as you reach forward with your hands to your ankle and torso to your thigh.

Stay down for 3 deep breaths. On an inhalation, raise the arms back up over the head as you sit up straight.

- **Seated Hip Stretch:** Cross one leg over the opposite knee so your ankle is resting just above the knee, forming a triangle. Keeping your back straight, lean slightly forward, hold this position for 3 deep breaths.

Cool down:

Take a few minutes to sit with your eyes closed and hands in your lap. This will help your body absorb all the good effects of the exercises you have done and transition you into the rest of your day.

I recommend starting with one set of 10 and working up to two to three sets of 10 if tolerated. If you are recovering from surgery or have a chronic medical condition, discuss your exercise regime with your doctor.



If you need any further information or guidance on chair exercises, please contact your physical therapist for advice.

LLPT wishes all the readers a healthy and peaceful Holiday Season.

Lize Lubbe is the owner of Lize Lubbe Physical Therapy with its main practice located at 892 Route 35 in Cross River and a PT Studio in the premises of Apex Fitness (where her team focus on the rehabilitation of sports-related injuries). Learn more by calling 914-875-9430, emailing contact@lizeclubbept.com or visiting www.lizeclubbept.com.



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