

Exercises to keep you moving

It's important to keep moving when you have arthritis. The exercises here will help you to stretch and strengthen your joints.

Remember to drink water while you're exercising and make sure you have plenty of space around you to avoid injury.

It's a good idea to start slowly and build up gradually if you're new to exercise. Get advice and support from a healthcare professional or fitness instructor if you have any concerns about starting a new exercise plan.

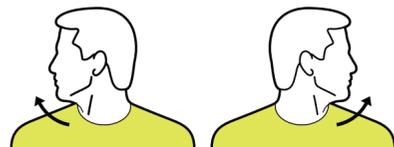
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Neck exercises

Head turn

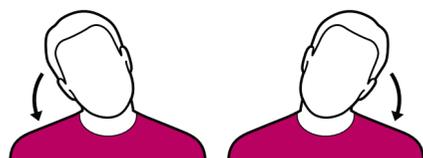
It's best to sit down for this exercise to help you balance. Turn your head towards one side, keeping your chin at the same height. Gently tense your neck muscles and hold for five seconds. Return your head to the centre and repeat on the opposite side. Repeat five times on each side.

If this is uncomfortable to do while you're standing or sitting, try it while lying down, so that your head is supported.



Head tilt

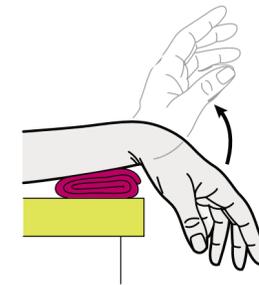
It's best to sit down for this exercise to help you balance. Tilt your head down towards your shoulder, leading with your ear. Gently tense your neck muscles and hold for five seconds. Return your head to the centre and repeat on the opposite side. Repeat five times on each side.



Hand and wrist exercises

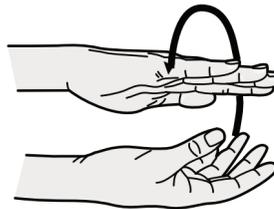
Hand lift

Place your forearm on a flat surface, like a table, with your hand hanging over the edge, palm facing down. A rolled-up towel under your wrist might provide comfort. Keeping your fingers relaxed, move your hand upward until you feel a gentle stretch, then return to the starting position.



Wrist turn

Bend your elbow to 90 degrees with your palm facing down. Rotate your forearm, so that your palm faces up and then down. You can stand or sit to do this.



Knee exercises

Sit-to-stands

Sit on a chair. Without using your hands for support, stand up and then sit back down. Make sure each movement is slow and controlled. Repeat until you can't do any more. Rest for one minute then repeat another two times. If the chair is too low, start with rising from a cushion on the seat and remove when you don't need it anymore.



Straight-leg raise

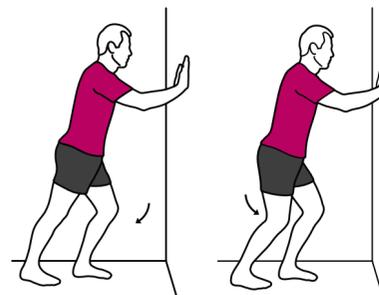
Sit back in your chair, with a straight back. Straighten and raise one of your legs. Hold for a slow count to 10, then slowly lower your leg. Repeat 10 times with each leg.



Foot and ankle exercises

Wall push

(a) Facing a wall, put both hands on the wall at shoulder height and place one foot in front of the other. The front foot should be around 30cm (12 inches) from the wall. With the front knee bent and the back knee straight, bend the front knee towards the wall, until the calf in your back leg feels tight. Relax and repeat 10 times.



(b) Repeat (a) but bring the back foot forward a little, so that the back knee is slightly bent. Repeat this 10 times.

Ankle rotation

Move your ankle around slowly in a circle. Do this 10 times one way, then repeat in the opposite direction.



Shoulder and elbow exercises

Elbow bend

Stand up straight and lower your arm to one side. Bend your arm slowly upwards so your hand is touching your shoulder. Hold for 15-30 seconds. Repeat 10 times. This exercise can also be done with a light weight.



Arm lifts

Place your hands behind your head so your elbows are pointing to the sides and pressed back as far as you can. Hold for five seconds.

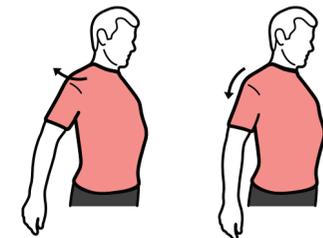


Then place your hands behind your back, again keeping your elbows pointing out and pressed back as far as you can. Hold for five seconds.

Do each movement five times.

Shoulder stretch

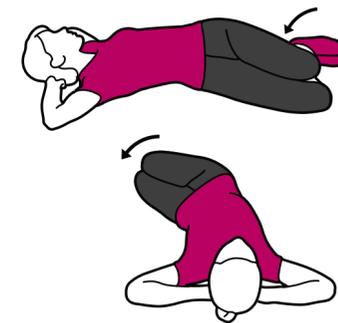
Squeeze your shoulder blades back and together and hold for five seconds. Pull your shoulder blades downward and hold for five seconds. Relax and repeat 10 times.



Back exercises

Knee rolls

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet together. Roll your knees to one side, keeping your shoulders flat on the bed or floor, and hold for 10 seconds. Roll your knees back to the starting position, and then over to the other side and repeat. Do this exercise three times on each side.



Knees to chest

Lie on your back, with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor or bed. Bring one knee up and use your hands to pull it gently towards your chest. Hold the leg in position for five seconds, and then relax. Repeat this exercise with the other knee. Do the exercise five times on each side.



Hip exercises

Bridging

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor or bed. Lift your pelvis and lower back off the floor. Hold the position for five seconds and then lower down slowly.



Squats

Hold onto a chair or work surface for support. Squat down until your kneecap is directly over your big toe. Your knees should not go in front of your toes. Return to your normal standing position.

Repeat until you can't do anymore, rest for one minute, then repeat another two times. As you improve, try to squat a little further, but don't bend your knees beyond a right angle.

