

# Move More Wakefield District

**Active at home programme**



With all of us in mind

The [active at home](#) programme has been developed to increase your activity levels in the comfort of your own home, and in turn improving your balance and reducing your risk of falls.

The programme removes some of the barriers (being intimidated, cost, time etc) that may stop you being active out in the community. You may however want to consider this in the future if you feel comfortable.

The [active at home](#) programme is for you if you'd like to reduce your risk of:

- Type 2 diabetes by 40%
- Cardiovascular disease by 35%
- Falls, depression and dementia by 30%
- Joint and back pain by 25%
- Cancers (colon and breast) by 20%

It's also great if you want to improve:

- Your overall health and quality of life
- Your ability to sleep
- Your ability to manage stress
- Your confidence to get out the house and socialise more

*(UK Chief Medical Officers' Guidelines 2011)*

[‘Falls destroy confidence, increase isolation and reduce independence with around 1 in 10 older people who fall becoming afraid to leave their homes in case they fall again’](#)

*(Help the Aged 2008)*

There are two levels to the [active at home](#) programme. This means that you can start at the right level for your current level of fitness and one that you are comfortable with.

## **Your safety**

Before starting the [active at home](#) programme, there are a few things that you should consider for your safety.

- You should wear comfortable, loose fitting clothing and footwear that is supportive.
- Make sure you have a sturdy chair on an even surface.
- Make sure the temperature of the room is not too warm and have a glass of water to hand.
  
- You should exercise at a level that you find comfortable but expect to experience periods of *mild discomfort*.
- If you experience *pain* in your joints and muscles you may want to stop the exercise and rest. If or when you start the exercise again, the pain persists, you may want to speak with your GP before performing that particular exercise again.
  
- You should expect to feel your muscles working and experience *mild discomfort* whilst exercising.
- You may experience *muscle soreness* after you have exercised. This is normal but can be reduced by completing cool down exercises.
  
- You should be careful not to hold your breath while exercising.
  
- If, while exercising, you experience chest pain, dizziness or *significant* shortness of breath, you should stop exercising immediately. If any of the above persist after stopping exercise you should call an ambulance or contact your GP.

If you're completing the [active at home](#) programme before attending an appropriately supervised exercise session you may wish to speak with your GP to make sure that you are medically fit to complete the programme.

[‘A tailored exercise programme can reduce falls by as much as 54%’](#)

*(BHF 2013)*

[‘Evidence-based programmes should ‘prescribe’ exercises to be carried out by participants at home’](#)

*(Royal College of Physicians 2012)*

## The active at home programme – level 1

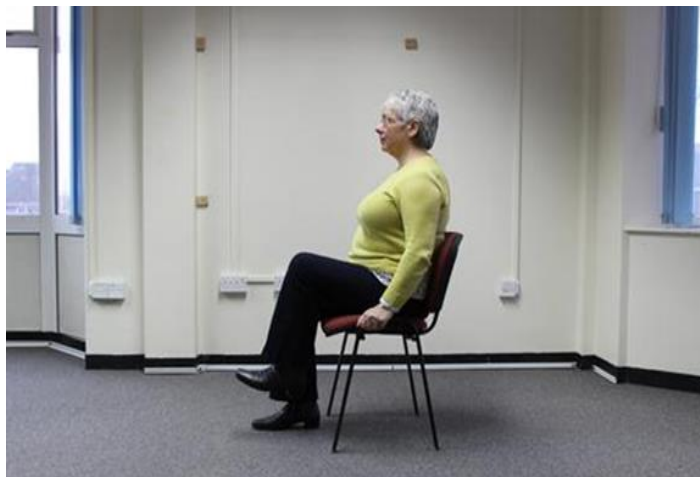
If you are new to exercise and/or have a low level of fitness you should start at this level.

### Warm up

The warm up should be your starting point every time you complete the level 1 programme. This will help you to prepare for the session ahead and reduce your risk of injury.

### Seated marching

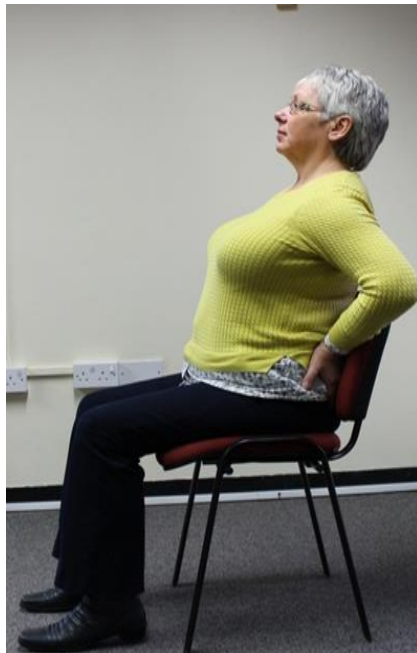
- Sit tall with your feet placed hip width apart
- March slowly, lifting one knee at a time to a comfortable level.
- Continue the exercise for 1-2 minutes, making sure you feel comfortable throughout.



### Seated back extension

- Sit tall and ensure your feet are placed hip width apart.
- Place your hands towards your bottom.
- Gently arch your back whilst looking forward.

- Do not look down or up towards the ceiling.



- Repeat 5 times.

### **Seated trunk rotations**

- Sit tall with your feet placed hip width apart.
- Fold your arms in front of your chest.
- Lift your arms upwards and then slowly turn the head and shoulders to the right.
- Make sure you are only turning the upper body and not your hips.
- Return to the start position and repeat to the other side.
- Complete the full cycle 5 times.





### **Neck rotations**

- Sit tall with your feet hip width apart and your arms loose by your side.
- Turn your head slowly to the left and then slowly to the right as far as you can.
- Make sure your shoulders stay still and that only the head is moving.
- Complete the full cycle 5 times.



## **Strength and balance exercises**

The following exercises will help to increase your strength and balance and reduce your risk of falls.

### **Seated toe raises**

- Sit tall towards the front of the chair.
- Hold the sides of the chair if required.
- Place the heel of one foot on the floor and then lift your toes up towards the ceiling, holding for a count of 5
- Repeat with the other foot.
- Repeat 5 times on each foot.



### **Seated heel raises**

- Sit tall towards the front of the chair.
- Hold the sides of the chair if required.
- Place the toes of one foot on the floor and then lift your heel up towards the ceiling and hold for a count of 5.
- Repeat with the other foot.

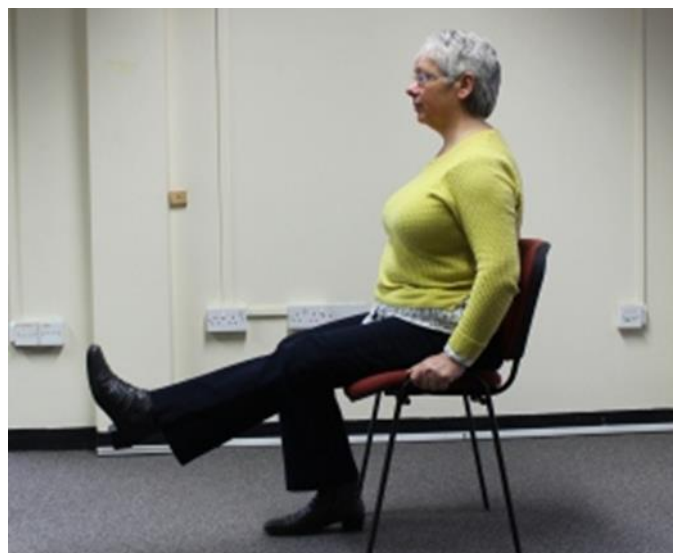


- Repeat 5 times on each foot.



### **Seated leg extension**

- Sit back in the chair with your back supported and your feet under your knees.
- Brush one foot along the floor, lifting the ankle slowly whilst straightening the knee (do not lock the knee joint).
- Lower the foot with control.
- Aim to lift for a count of 3 seconds and lower for a count of 5 seconds.
- Repeat 5 times before moving onto the other leg. You should look to gradually build up to 10 times on each leg.



## Sit to stand

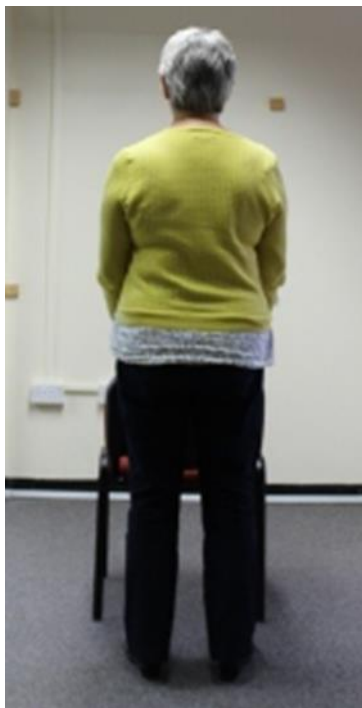
- Sit tall towards the front of the chair.
- Place your feet slightly back.
- Lean forwards slightly.
- Stand up (using your hands on the chair if needed) slowly.
- Step back until your legs touch the chair.
- Slowly lower your bottom back into the chair, reaching for the chair as you lower if needed.
- Start by repeating 5 times whilst gradually building up to 10.



**If you feel comfortable, you can complete the next exercise which involves standing while holding onto a chair for support.**

### **Standing hip swings**

- Stand tall with your feet hip width apart whilst holding onto a chair.
- Lift the leg slowly out to the side whilst keeping your toes pointing forwards.
- Avoid leaning the body to the side, paying particular attention to your posture
- Return the leg to the start position and continue for 5 times, gradually building up to 10.
- Change legs and follow as above.
- Aim to lift and lower the leg at a comfortable, controlled pace.



## Cool down

The following exercises should be completed at the end of the session. This will help to reduce any stiffness in your muscles, helping you to recover quicker and improving your flexibility.

### Seated calf stretch

- Sit forwards in your chair and hold on if required.
- One knee should be bent and directly above the ankle.
- Whilst resting your heel on the floor straighten the other leg (avoid locking the knee joint out).
- Pull your toes towards your body to feel the stretch in the calf muscle.
- Hold the stretch for 10-15 seconds.
- Relax and repeat on the other leg.



## Seated back stretch

- Sit tall and place your feet hip width apart.
- While holding onto the side of the chair, rotate the neck and chest to the same side as your hands.
- Hold the stretch for 10-15 seconds
- Repeat on the other side



## Well done

Congratulations you have completed the level 1 [active at home](#) programme.

You should now look to move onto the level 2 [active at home](#) programme which will help to further increase your strength and balance levels.

## The active at home programme – level 2

### Warm up

The warm-up should be your starting point every time you complete the level 2 programme. This will help you to prepare for the session ahead and your risk of injury.

### Marching

- Stand tall, holding onto your chair if required.
- March slowly, lifting one knee at a time to a comfortable level.
- If you feel comfortable you can bring in arm swings.
- Continue marching for 1 – 2 minutes.



### Standing Trunk Rotations

- Stand tall with your feet placed hip width apart.
- Fold your arms in front of your chest.
- Lift your arms upwards and then slowly turn the head and shoulders to the right.
- Make sure you are only turning the upper body and not your hips.
- Return to the start position and repeat to the other side.
- Complete the full cycle 5 times.



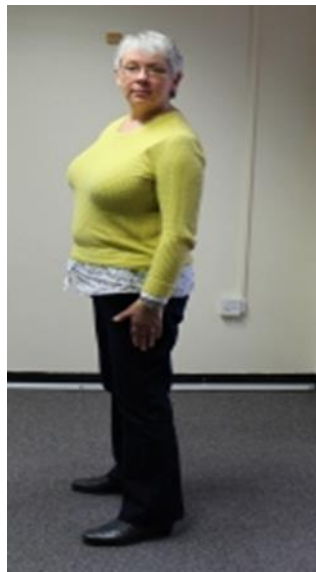
### **Standing back extension**

- Stand tall and ensure your feet are placed hip width apart.
- Place your hands towards your bottom.
- Gently arch your back whilst looking forward.
- Do not look down or up towards the ceiling.
- Repeat 5 times.



## **Standing neck rotations**

- Stand tall with your feet hip width apart and your arms loose by your side.
- Turn your head slowly to the left and then slowly to the right as far as you can.
- Make sure your shoulders stay still and that only the head is moving.
- Complete the full cycle 5 times.





## Strength and balance exercises

The following exercises will help to increase your strength and balance and reduce your risk of falls.

### Standing calf raises

- Stand tall and ensure your feet are hip width apart.
- Hold onto the chair with both hands.
- Lift your heels off the ground making sure you lift and lower at a comfortable, controlled pace.
- Avoid rocking back on your heels.
- Repeat 5 times, gradually building up to 10.



## Standing toe raises

- Stand tall and ensure your feet are hip width apart.
- Hold onto the chair with both hands.
- Raise your toes whilst taking the weight on your heels, lifting and lowering at a comfortable, controlled pace.
- Avoid rocking backwards and forwards.
- Repeat 5 times, gradually building up to 10.



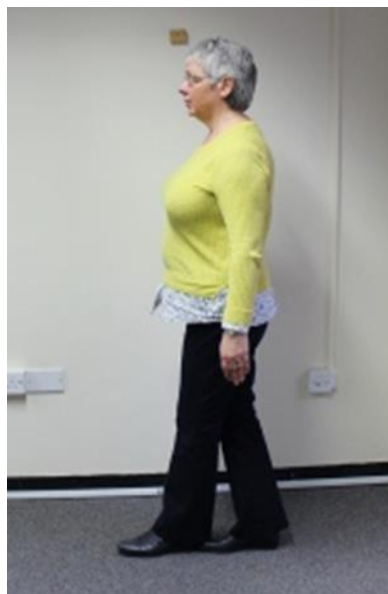
## Standing hamstring curls

- Stand tall and place your feet hip width apart.
- Hold onto the chair with both hands.
- Slowly bend your left knee lifting your ankle towards your bottom.
- Lift and lower the leg and a comfortable, controlled pace.
- Repeat for 5 times, gradually building up to 10.
- Repeat on the other leg.



### Heel-toe walking

- Stand tall with one hand on a surface such as a kitchen worktop.
- Walk two steps forwards placing one foot directly in front of the other so the feet form a straight line.
- Aim for a steady walking action.
- Take the feet back to hip width apart, turn round and repeat the steps in the other direction.
- You should look to build up to 10 steps.



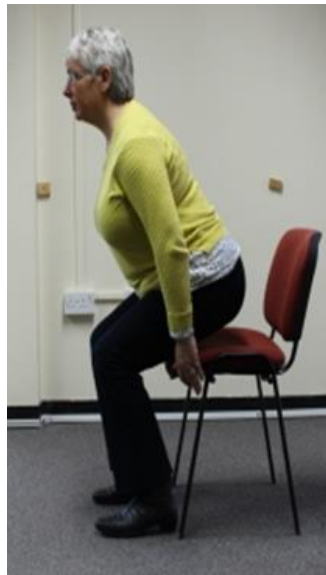
## Sideways walking

- Stand tall facing a chair or kitchen worktop whilst looking ahead.
- Take two sideways steps whilst keeping the hips forwards and knees soft.
- Build up to 10 times.
- Slowly repeat the other way.



## Sit to stand

- Sit tall near the front of your chair.
- Place your feet slightly back.
- Lean forwards slightly.
- Stand up (using your hands on the chair if needed) slowly.
- Step back until your legs touch the chair.
- Slowly lower your bottom back into the chair, reaching for the chair as you lower if needed.
- Repeat up to 10 times.



## Cool down

The following exercises should be completed at the end of the session. This will help to reduce any stiffness in your muscles, helping you to recover quicker and improving your flexibility.

### Seated calf stretch

- Sit forwards in your chair and hold on if required.
- One knee should be bent and directly above the ankle.
- Whilst resting your heel on the floor straighten the other leg (avoid locking the knee joint out).
- Pull your toes towards your body to feel the stretch in the calf muscle.
- Hold the stretch for 10-15 seconds.
- Relax and repeat on the other leg.



### Back of the Thigh Stretch

- Ensure that you are right at the front of your chair.
- Straighten one leg (do not lock your knee out) whilst placing your heel on the floor.
- Whilst sitting tall, place both hands on the other leg.
- Lean forwards with a straight back to feel the stretch in the back of your thigh.



### **Seated back stretch**

- Sit tall and place your feet hip width apart.
- Whilst holding onto the side of the chair, rotate the neck and chest to the same side as your hands.
- Hold the stretch for 10-15 seconds
- Repeat on the other side



Congratulations, you have completed the level 2 [active at home](#) programme.

If possible, you should complete the programme 2 - 3 times per week, making the programme a routine part of your life.

[‘The recommended frequency for effective falls prevention is at least twice and preferably three times a week’](#)

*(Sherrington et al 2011)*

Completing the programme will help to maintain your independence and increase your overall strength levels.

Day-to-day tasks such as getting up out of a chair or carrying shopping will start to feel a bit easier.

### **Building the exercises into your daily routine**

As well as completing the full level 1 and level 2 routines you may want to build some of the exercises into your daily routine. You can do this while you wait for the kettle to boil, whilst sat at the breakfast table or watching your favourite television programmes, for example.

### **Making progress with balance**

Once you feel comfortable with completing the level 2 exercises, you may want to reduce the amount of hand support you use. This should be done at your own pace and only when you feel ready. You can start to progress by releasing a few fingers at a time, making sure you feel comfortable each time you do this.



## **Building physical activity into your daily routine**

As well as completing the [active at home](#) programme exercises you may want to build physical activity into your daily routine. Examples of some types of physical activity include:

- Vacuuming the house.
- Dusting around the house and cleaning windows.
- Doing the laundry.
- Cooking and preparing food.
- Going up and down the stairs.
- Opening and closing doors.
- Reaching for items in cupboards.
- Bathing and washing yourself.
- Going for a walk.



## References

BHF (2013) Falls Prevention Exercise – following the evidence:

<http://www.bhfactive.org.uk/userfiles/Documents/FallsPreventionGuide2013.pdf>

Help the Aged (2008) Spotlight Report 2008:

[http://www.ageuk.org.uk/documents/en-gb/for-professionals/research/spotlight%20report%202008\\_pro.pdf?dtrk=true](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/documents/en-gb/for-professionals/research/spotlight%20report%202008_pro.pdf?dtrk=true)

Royal College of Physicians (2012) Older people's experiences of therapeutic exercises as part of a falls prevention service. Patient and public involvement report:

<https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/falls-patient-and-public-involvement>

Sherrington C et al (2011) 'Exercise to prevent falls in older adults: an updated meta-analysis and best practice recommendations' New South Wales Public Health Bulletin, Jun; 22 (3-4): 78-83

UK Chief Medical Officers' Guidelines (2011) Start Active, Stay Active: Report on Physical Activity in the UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/start-active-stay-active-a-report-on-physical-activity-from-the-four-home-countries-chief-medical-officers>

## **Disclaimer**

When completing the programmes and individual exercises described in this booklet the individual takes responsibility for their actions.

The authors take no responsibility.

All information included is evidence-based but should not be taken as a medical substitute. If you are unsure whether it is appropriate for you to complete the programme and individual exercises, please consult with GP (as within the 'Your safety' section of this booklet).

Instructors and related professionals using the content of this booklet do so at their own risk.

The [active at home](#) programme is not tailored to the individual and as a result the author is not aware of any health conditions or the physical fitness levels of individuals completing the programme. Any significant increases in pain etc should be discussed with your GP.