

Standing exercise programme

Advice for in-patients

Name:

Produced in collaboration with



Active Hospital
Project

Who is this booklet for?

This booklet contains general advice and exercises to guide you to become more active whilst you are in hospital.

Having a stay in hospital may leave you feeling weaker than usual and everyday tasks may feel very challenging and tiring. Moving more whilst you're in hospital can help you to maintain your independence and reduce the risk of developing further medical problems.

This booklet details a number of exercises that can be carried out on the ward. You should be standing up, ideally next to a stable supporting surface. There are exercises to work on stamina, flexibility, strength and balance, as well as guidance on how to make the exercises more challenging. It's also beneficial to continue doing these exercises when you leave hospital.



Why not ask your friends or relatives to help you when they come to visit?

If you are interested in more exercises for older people, you might want to look at the 'Generation Games' seated exercise video on YouTube.

www.generationgames.org.uk – Exercise at home for the over 50s

Or exercise along to the short video developed by the Active Hospital team at **www.ouh.nhs.uk/services/departments/acute-emergency/geratology**

It may be that you weren't particularly active before you came into hospital. Many people find that being in hospital prompts them to look again at the role of physical activity in their day-to-day routine. Remember, it's never too late to increase the amount you do.

[new paragraph, after 'the amount you do']With small increases in activity, people can very quickly improve their fitness, making it easier to participate in activities that are important to them. Increasing the amount of exercise you do will bring a range of benefits, not only to your general health. You are also likely to experience:

- improved sleep
- a more steady, healthy weight
- fewer problems with stress.

Setting goals can be a helpful way of monitoring your progression and making sure the exercises are having the desired effect. These goals should be personal to you, and we would encourage you to discuss them with your therapist. If you are interested in exploring this further, we can provide you with a goal-setting booklet that helps guide you through the process.

How to use this booklet

You will see the following symbols throughout the booklet:



Step by step instructions explaining how to perform the exercise



The reason the exercise is important for you



Top tips

How much should I do?

Ideally you should practise these exercises every day. You may prefer to practise in smaller activity chunks, for example arm exercises in one session and leg exercises in the next.

How do I know when to stop exercising?

If you are not used to being physically active, it is normal to experience some muscle soreness after doing a new activity. This discomfort will reduce as you become more accustomed to the activity. Worsening symptoms may be due to increasing activity too quickly; try reducing activity levels a little and then gradually increase them again more slowly.

Dizziness, sickness or excessive tiredness are signals to stop exercising and wait for symptoms to settle. Warning signs to seek urgent medical attention include blacking out, chest pain, or excessive shortness of breath.



The most important thing is to start small and build up gradually. During the first 2-3 months of increasing your physical activity it may be helpful to be active with other people.

Marching



Stand tall next to your bed.

Start marching gently on the spot with your feet hip width apart.

Continue at an even pace for about 2 minutes.

Feeling unsteady?

- ✓ Rest your hands on a stable surface if you need more support.
- ✓ Reduce the height you're lifting your feet.

Need more?

- ✓ Lift your knees a little higher.
- ✓ Add in an arm swing.



This is a good warm-up for your legs at the start of your exercise session.



You might find this exercise starts to make you feel a bit warmer and breathe a little heavier. You should still be able to hold a conversation.

Side leg lift



Stand tall with your hands resting on a stable surface.

Keeping your toes facing forwards, lift one leg out sideways a small distance.

Hold for a count of 5 then gently lower back down.

Do 2 sets of 10 with each leg.

Need more?

- ✓ Increase the number of sets of 10.
- ✓ Add a small ankle weight.



This helps to strengthen the muscles on the side of your hip. These are important when you're standing and walking and also when moving your leg sideways (for example when getting in and out of bed).

Forward taps



Stand sideways with your hip next to the bed or a stable surface.

Place one heel on the ground in front of you.

Lift the same foot back and point your toes to the floor.

Do 2 sets of 10 with each leg.

Need more?

- ✓ Keep doing the exercise for 1 minute, without a pause.
- ✓ Add in an arm bend.



This helps to improve flexibility of your ankles, which is helpful when getting up from a chair and going up and down stairs. It is also good for the circulation in your legs.

Mini squat



Stand next to the bed, holding on with one hand if you need to.

Bend your knees, keeping your body upright and heels on the floor.

Hold for 5 seconds, then stand up tall again.

Repeat 5 times.

Too much?

✓ Slightly reduce how far you bend your knees.

Need more?

✓ Gradually increase how far you bend your knees.

✓ Increase to 10 repetitions.



This helps to strengthen the muscles on the front of your thigh. These are the powerful muscles that help when you get up from a chair and provide strength to your knees when you're walking.

Shoulder press



Stand next to the bed.

Bring one hand up towards your shoulder then push your hand straight up into the air. Your elbow should be straight but not locked.

Do 2 sets of 10 with each arm.

Need more?

- ✓ Add a small weight, such as a half-litre bottle of water. Increase this weight when ready.
- ✓ Build up the number of repetitions again with the weight.



This helps to strengthen the muscles in your shoulder and upper arm. These muscles are important when reaching up, for example to get something from a shelf.

Side arm lifts



Stand facing the bed. Hold on with one hand if needed.

Lift one arm up out to the side.

Hold for 5 seconds then slowly lower.

Do 10 with each arm.

Need more?

- ✓ Increase the number of repetitions to 3 sets of 10.
- ✓ Hold a small weight then build up the number of repetitions again.



This helps to increase strength in your shoulders, which can help with everyday tasks.

Onto toes



Stand next to the bed or a stable surface, holding on to give you as much support as you need.

Move your weight towards the front of your foot and lift your heels.

Balance for 5 seconds. Use the surface for additional support if you need it.

Repeat 5 times.

Quick tip:

Keep the weight on your first (big) and second toes.

Need more?

- ✓ Work towards being able to do this exercise without using support. Gradually reduce the support from your arms to your hands, then one hand and finally fingertips only.



This helps to improve the strength around your ankles and your balance when you're walking.

Onto heels



Stand next to the bed or a stable surface. Hold on for support if needed.

Move your weight toward the back of your foot, lifting your toes up from the floor (keep your body straight).

Balance for 5 seconds.

Repeat 5 times.

Need more?

- ✓ Work towards being able to do this exercise without support. Gradually reduce the support from your arms to your hands, then one hand and finally fingertips only.



This helps to improve strength in your ankles and balance when you're walking.

Stride stand



Stand sideways with your hip next to the bed or stable surface.

Take a stride forwards with one foot.

Balance in that position for 5 seconds.

Repeat 5 times.

Feeling unsteady?

- ✓ Make the step slightly shorter.
- ✓ Use your hand for support to start with.

Need more?

- ✓ Step one foot directly in front of the other as shown in the picture on the right. This makes your base much narrower, making it more difficult to balance.
- ✓ Work again towards reducing the amount of hand support you need.



This helps to improve your balance when walking.

Sit to stand



Move towards the front of the chair. Your feet should be flat on the floor, slightly behind your knees.

Bring your upper chest forward and, with your hands on the sides of the chair, push through your feet and hands into a standing position.

Repeat 5 times.

Not quite there yet?

- ✓ Start by lifting your bottom just a small distance, pushing through your arms.
- ✓ Make it easier by starting in a higher seat.

Need more?

- ✓ Rely less on your arms, using the strength in your legs more.
- ✓ Do more repetitions.



This helps to improve strength in your legs and hips. This makes it easier to get up from a chair.



Try practising this exercise once every hour.

Produced as part of the Active Hospital Pilot at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, aiming to improve levels of activity in hospitals.

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If you need an interpreter or would like this information leaflet in another format, such as Easy Read, large print, Braille, audio, electronically or another language, please speak to the department where you are being seen. You will find their contact details on your appointment letter.

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