

# Elderly & Functional Exercise

## Why is it important for seniors to exercise?

Regular exercise can help build up muscles, increase strength and flexibility, and maintain good health. For seniors, exercise helps improve their ability to do the things they want to do. Being active and exercising regularly can help manage and prevent diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure. If you already have a chronic disease, regular exercise can also help you manage symptoms. In addition, when you exercise, your body releases chemicals called endorphins, which help reduce perception of pain, improve mood and maintain mental health.

## Four Functional Exercises

<b>Flexibility</b>	<p>Stretching can help your body stay flexible and limber, which gives you more freedom of movement for your regular physical activity as well as for your everyday activities.</p> <p>Examples: Shoulder and upper arm stretches, calf stretches, yoga</p>
<b>Balance</b>	<p>Balance exercises improve the coordination of muscles and nerves, which help prevent falls.</p> <p>Examples: Standing on one foot, balance walk exercise, tai chi</p>
<b>Strength</b>	<p>Strength exercises can help strengthen your muscle, improve your abilities to carry groceries, and climb stairs.</p> <p>Examples: Lifting weights, using a resistance band</p>
<b>Endurance</b>	<p>Endurance activities increase your breathing and heart rate, and improve the health of your heart, lungs, and circulatory system.</p> <p>Examples: Brisk walking, jogging, dancing, swimming, biking</p>

## Flexibility - Neck

*This easy stretch can help relieve tension in your neck.*

1. You can do this stretch while standing or sitting in a sturdy chair.
2. Keep your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.
3. Slowly turn your head to the right until you feel a slight stretch. Be careful not to tip or tilt your head forward or backward, but hold it in a comfortable position.
4. Hold the position for 10-30 seconds.
5. Turn your head to the left and hold the position for 10-30 seconds.
6. Repeat at least 3-5 times.



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## Flexibility - Ankle

This exercise stretches your ankle muscles

1. Sit securely toward the edge of a sturdy, armless chair.
2. Stretch your legs out in front of you.
3. With your heels on the floor, bend your ankles to point toes toward you. Hold the position for 10-30 seconds.
4. Bend ankles to point toes away from you and hold for 10-30 seconds.
5. Repeat at least 3-5 times.



## Strength - Overhead Arm Raise

This exercise will strengthen your shoulders and arms.  
It should make lifting and carrying things easier.

1. You can do this exercise while standing or sitting in a sturdy armless chair.
2. Keep your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.
3. Hold weights at your sides at shoulder height with palms facing forward. Breathe in slowly.
4. Slowly breathe out as you raise both arms up over your head keeping your elbows slightly bent.
5. Hold the position for 1 second.
6. Breathe in as you slowly lower your arms.
7. Repeat 10-15 times.
8. Rest; then repeat 10-15 more times.



## Balance - Stand on One Foot

This exercise will strengthen your leg muscles and improve your balance

1. Stand on one foot behind a sturdy chair, holding on for balance.
2. Hold position for up to 10 seconds.
3. Repeat 10-15 times.
4. Repeat 10-15 times with other leg.



## Make It Fun and Make It Safe

- Move steadily and slowly to prevent falls and injuries.
- Remember to breathe when you exercise.
- It is normal for muscles and tendons to be slightly strained. However, if the strain becomes painful, you need to stop exercising.
- Having an “exercise buddy”

