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Parkinson's disease: Seated exercises

***Information for
patients and carers***

Physiotherapy Department

Before you exercise

Safety

Please make sure the chair or support you use is stable and supportive. If you are doing any standing exercises, please use a support as advised by your healthcare professional. Your healthcare professional will advise you where is best to complete your exercises in your home.

While exercising, if you have any chest pain, dizziness or severe shortness of breath, stop immediately and contact your doctor (or call an ambulance if you continue to deteriorate).

If you have persistent pain after starting these exercises, please discuss with your healthcare professional as soon as possible.

Warm up exercises

Always do the warm up exercises below before the main exercises.

The warm up is four different exercises you can do in your chair.

Warm up exercise 1: Marching with opening arms



Start position



Finish position

1. Sit up tall in your chair, with your feet flat on the floor.
2. For this exercise you are going to move your arms and legs at the same time.
3. Lift your legs one at a time like you are marching on the spot. At the same time, open and close your arms as shown in the pictures.
4. Complete this for 1 minute or as advised by therapist.

Warm up exercise 2: Side taps with arms up



1. Sit up tall in your chair, with your feet flat on the floor.
2. For this exercise you are going to move your arms and legs at the same time.
3. Lift one leg out to the side while pushing your arms up above. Lift your leg back in and lower your arms. Repeat on alternate sides continuing the upward arm motion.
4. Complete this for 1 minute or as advised by your therapist.

Warm up exercise 3: Heel taps with arms out



Start position



Finish position

1. Sit up tall in your chair, with your feet flat on the floor.
2. For this exercise you are going to move your arms and legs at the same time.
3. Start position is shown in the first photo.
4. Push your hands out in front at the same time as touching your heel to the floor, as shown in the second photo.
5. Bring your arms and leg back in and repeat on the other leg.
6. Complete this for 1 minute or as advised by your therapist.

Warm up exercise 4: Trunk rotation



1. Sit up tall in your chair, with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Turn your torso to one side. You should feel a stretch down your back.
3. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds, then repeat in the opposite direction.

Main exercises

There are nine main exercises and two stretches to complete.

Try to do them all unless your therapist has told you otherwise.

How you do the exercises is important. All the movements are exaggerated and done with speed. Your therapist will show you the correct way to do each exercise.

Remember to complete your warm up before your main exercises.

Top tip:

Some people find counting in time or to a rhythmical beat helps coordinate their movement and reduce episodes of freezing. This is known as “cueing”. Your therapist can discuss this further with you.

Main exercise 1: Rotations



Front position



Rotated position

1. Sit up tall in your chair, with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Extend your arms out in front, your fingers spread wide.
3. Quickly rotate your arms to one side, slowly bring them back to the centre.
4. Repeat times.

Main exercise 2: Ball lifts



Start position



Finish position

1. Sit up tall in your chair, with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Hold the ball straight out in front of you.
3. With speed and force, lift the ball up above your head, hold for a moment and then slowly return to the starting position.
4. Repeat times.

Main exercise 3: Ball rotations



Rotate to your right

Rotate to your left

1. Sit up tall in your chair, with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Hold the ball straight out in front of you.
3. With speed and force rotate the ball to one side, keeping your arms straight.
4. Slowly return to the starting position, holding the ball straight out in front.
5. Rotate to the opposite side in the same fashion.
6. Repeat times.

Main exercise 4: Chest opener



Start position



Finish position

1. Sit up tall in your chair, with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Hold your arms out in front, your fingers spread wide.
3. With speed and force, open your arms up whilst pulling your shoulder blades back and sitting up as tall as you can.
4. Slowly return to your arms to the starting position, arms out in front.
5. Repeat times.

Main exercise 5: Pelvic tilts



Slumped position



Sit tall position

1. Sit up tall in your chair, with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Slump down, reaching forwards and allow your back to curve (first photo).
3. Then sit up tall, push your chest out and stretch your arms backwards (second photo). If you can't pull your arms back, rest them on your knees.
4. This is a slow and controlled movement to help ease off your lower back.
5. Repeat times.

Main exercise 6: Start the lawnmower



Reach down



Pull up and across

1. Sit up tall in your chair, with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Reach down and across your body with one arm (as in first photo). This is your starting position.
3. With speed and force, pull your arm up and across your body as if you were “starting a lawnmower”. Your end position should be full extension of your arm and rotation of the torso (as in second photo).
4. Slowly return to your starting position.
5. Repeat times.

Main exercise 7: Scarf throw



Start position



Lift up and release

1. Sit up tall in your chair, with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Hold a scarf down by your side.
3. Throw the scarf up above, extending your arm as high up as you can.
4. With a downward motion of your arm, catch the scarf pulling it down towards the floor. The downward motion is your fast and powerful one.
5. Repeat times.

Main exercise 8: Sit to stand



Start position

Standing position

1. Sit up tall in your chair, with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Stand up from your chair and if able, push your hands out in front at the same time.
3. The pushing motion of your arms should be powerful with your fingers spread out wide.
4. Stand for a moment, then in a controlled manner, return to sitting.
5. Repeat times.

Main exercise 9: Throw and catch



1. Sit up tall in your chair, with your feet flat on the floor.
2. If able, position your chair in front of a blank space of wall. NOTE: you can do this exercise with a friend, partner or carer instead of using a wall.
3. Throw the ball against a wall or to your partner. As you become more able, try more challenging throws so you lean and reach to catch the ball.
4. Repeat times.

Main exercise 10a: Stretch in your chair



1. Sit at the front of your chair.
2. Bend one leg and keep your other leg straight.
3. Place your hands above your knee on your straight leg and pull your toes up towards you. Hold for 20 seconds
4. You should feel a stretch down the back of your leg.
5. Repeat twice on each leg.

Main exercise 10b: Stretch while standing



1. Stand while holding on to the back of your chair or kitchen worktop.
2. Place one foot in front of the other.
3. Bend your front leg and keep your back leg straight.
4. Gently lean forwards feeling a stretch down the back of your leg.
5. Hold for 20 seconds, repeat twice on each leg.

Your exercise diary

Discuss with your therapist how often to do your exercises. Use this diary to record your progress.

Date	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Disclaimer

When you complete your exercises you do so at your own risk; the author of these exercises accepts no liability.

Your health care professional is responsible for assessing safety and risk when prescribing these exercises and adapting exercises where required.

Any deteriorating changes to your health, please contact your healthcare professional or GP.

This booklet is not a substitute for medical advice

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