

ACTIVE AGEING ACTIVITY CARDS

These activity cards have been developed by as part of the THENAPA II project and are designed to provide practitioners working with older people and older disabled people with ideas about how to include them in physical activity programmes.





These resources will also be useful for other professionals as instructional aids and for students in relevant programmes of study.

The cards are grouped according to the following themed areas:







WARMING UP, INTRODUCTION

These activities will not only help participants to prepare for exercise at their own pace but also help them think about the benefits of exercise.

-  1. Find the Word Warm Up
-  2. Dice Warm Up



COORDINATION

These activities aim to develop coordination, motor control and visual tracking skills. Some include elements of strength exercises.

-  3. Balloon Frenzy
-  4. Turning and Looking
-  5. Moving Target
-  6. Clap and Walk
-  7. At Home
-  8. Rock Climbing

BALANCE

These activities aim to develop balance and posture control.

-  9. Tread Strong
-  10. Question of Balance

ACTIVE AGEING ACTIVITY CARDS



COGNITIVE, SOCIAL

The purpose of these activities is to maintain orientation and stimulate cognitive skills, including recognition and recall of information.

-  11. Rings and Bags
-  12. Planets Game
-  13. Kuddelmuddel




STRETCHING

The purpose of these activities is to help maintain flexibility in the muscles and joints, to relieve tension and to prevent injuries and soreness.

-  14. Torso & Lower Body Stretching
-  15. Neck, Head & Upper Body Stretching



STRENGTH

The purpose of these activities is to improve muscular strength.

-  16. Push - Away
-  17. Body Strength
-  18. Lower Body Strength

RELAXATION

The purpose of these activities is to conclude the exercises in a relaxed manner.

-  19. Ripples and Waves
-  20. Relaxing Touch

The cards are numbered for convenience only, and can be used in any order.

Practitioners using these cards should ensure that participants have undergone appropriate health screening prior to taking part in the activities or have a clear awareness of their tolerance to exercise. Please note that every card has some information about safety considerations.

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"FIND THE WORD" WARM UP

The purpose of this activity is to prepare the participants for exercise at their own pace and help them think about the benefits of exercise.

Explanation

In this activity, the participants combine a treasure hunt with a warm up!

A flat outdoor area is best (like a large lawn or in a park). The participants move around the space, or are assisted to move, searching for 6 hidden cards. The cards contain words or phrases related to exercise. For example:

- **Stretch** your muscles daily
- **Stand and move** every hour

and other phrases relevant to different abilities.

As they move around the space, the participants collect the cards until they have all 6. They then return to the start point. Alternatively, each participant can have a card on which they write the key word(s) in each phrase. Leave pens near where the cards are hidden.

Equipment & Organisation

- any number can take part - large numbers use cards for each person and pens
- a flat outdoor space is best, but indoors can be used too
- word cards - the group can suggest words or phrases if possible

Safety considerations

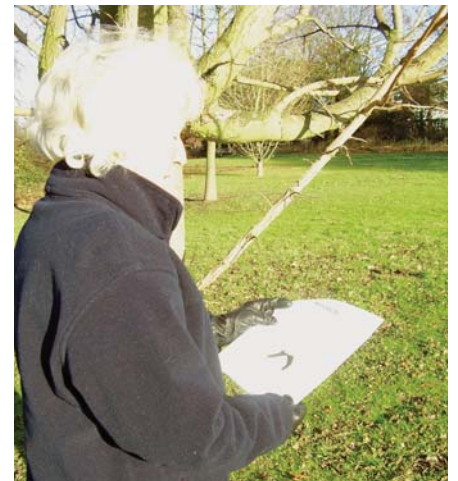
- be aware of others in the group moving around
- have rest places (seats or benches) where people can stop and maybe talk to each other.

Adaptations: easier

Make the distance between the hidden cards shorter (less distance).

Adaptations: harder

Use clues that lead to the location of each card. Or, use actual exercises - the participants do 30 seconds of each exercise that they find.



"DICE" WARM UP

The purpose of this activity is to prepare the participants for exercise in a fun way.

Explanation

This activity involves choice and chance! Arrange 3-6 exercise stations around the activity space. These could be:

1. arm circling
2. seated knee lifts
3. side bends
4. waist twists.

Illustrations of these exercises can be placed at each station.

Participants move to the centre of the space and roll a large foam die (dice) or alternatives (see below).

and perform the exercise (for 30 seconds or a given number of repetitions). When they have finished, they return to the centre and roll again. If they roll the same number, or a number that does not correspond to a station, they walk carefully around the outside of the stations and back to the middle.

Equipment & Organisation

- any number can take part provided space is sufficient
- suitable indoor or outdoor space
- picture cards showing the exercise at each station
- a large foam die (dice), or a cardboard cube numbered 1-6 on each side, or use cards numbered 1-6 placed face down on the floor.

Safety considerations

- be aware of others in the group
- ensure that the exercises used in the stations have been properly practised before playing this game.



The score they get will correspond to the number of a station. For example, if they roll a 1, they go to station 1



Adaptations: easier

Stay in the same place and do the exercises from there. Roll a dice or pick a card offered by the leader. For walking option, do seated marching on the spot.

Adaptations: harder

Increase the number of stations. Replace the warm-up exercises with stretches (but only after the warm-up).

BALLOON FRENZY

The purpose of this activity is to develop coordination and visual tracking skills - can be used as a warm up.



Explanation

The group sit in a small circle, everyone facing in. 8-10 people maximum is best.

Throw a large slow-moving balloon into the circle. Using their hands (fingers and palms), the participants try to keep the balloon in the air and inside the circle. Only one person should play the balloon at a time.

As the participants begin to control the movement of the balloon, add more balloons!

Once the participants cannot keep any more balloons in the air without some falling to the ground, stop and start again.



Equipment & Organisation

- People can sit to play - if there are large numbers, break into smaller circles. If the circle is too large, some people never touch the ball.
- The game is best played indoors otherwise the balloons blow away!

Safety considerations

- Be aware of over-exertion or over-excitement.
- Participants should be careful about bumping each other.
- Some people are afraid of balloons bursting. Use a large beach ball instead, or a balloon ball (balloon with material cover).

Adaptations: easier

Use only a few balloons - larger and slower-moving are easier to see and strike. Put a few rice grains in the balloon to make a noise and assist tracking (not too many - the balloon will fall quickly!).

Adaptations: harder

Add more balloons more quickly. Or add balloons that have less air inside. They will drop more quickly. The fast-falling balloons can be a specific colour.

TURNING AND LOOKING

The purpose of this activity is to coordinate head and arm rotation



Explanation

Participants place themselves in a relaxed and stable standing position, arms at their sides and looking to the front. Following a gentle rhythm, move the head to the right and rotate the right arm outwards - look at the palm of the right hand. Turn back to the centre. Do the same thing on the left side.

When individuals are used to the movement, let the arms rotate in different directions: e.g. right arm outwards and left arm inwards and inversely - as an addition, turn the head in the opposite direction to the inward turning arm.

Equipment & Organisation

- any group size or individual
- suitable indoor or outdoor space, no extra material, a chair or a mat if needed
- music (CD-player) or rhythmic (tambourine) accompaniment

Safety considerations

Careful not to get dizzy!

Adaptations: easier

Do the coordination movement of head and arms whilst safely seated on a chair using a slow tempo.

Adaptations: harder

Do the coordination movement when walking forward or backward.

Do it in pairs, facing each other like in a mirror, or with one person following the other, like a shadow.



MOVING TARGET

The purpose of this activity is to develop coordination and visual tracking skills on a social context.



Explanation

Participants stand or sit in two lines facing each other.

Each player has a ball - held with one or two hands as they prefer, depending on the size of the ball.

The leader, or one of the group, rolls a large target ball (for example, a gym or fitness ball) down the gap between the two groups.

The participants roll their balls to try and hit the moving target!

Try a competitive version, and see how many hits each team gets.

Equipment & Organisation

- People can sit or stand
- The game can be played indoors or outdoors.

Safety considerations

- Participants should be aware of balls coming from the other team towards them.
- It is safer if everyone rolls the ball - no throwing!
- Be careful about balls lying on the floor if people are standing. If this is a problem, get everyone to sit down to play.



Adaptations: easier

Start with the target ball not moving - just a target between the groups. Then progress to rolling the target ball very slowly. People who have problems with sending the ball can use a ball-sending ramp or gutter device.

Adaptations: harder

Roll the target ball more quickly down the gap. Or have more than one target ball. Use a smaller target ball. Play a football-type version. Mark a line on the floor 2 metres in front of each team. If a team knocks the ball over the other team's line, they score a goal!

CLAP AND WALK

The purpose of this activity is to coordinate the movement of different body parts and keep to a given rhythm



Explanation

Introduce a given rhythm (4/4 - common time) by regular clapping with the hands. Do it standing on the spot and then while walking. When used to the rhythm, start to do gentle clapping on the stomach (tummy) - and again combine it with walking. When familiar with the 2 different ways of clapping and walking start to do 4 times hands and 4 times stomach - first standing still then walking.

After some time, add clapping on other body parts, like thighs, knees, calves or the head (soft!). Combine the various ways of clapping, for example, 4 times hands, 4 times stomach, 4 times thighs, 4 times knees - or any other combination.



Equipment & Organisation

- any group size or individual
- suitable indoor or outdoor space, no extra material is needed
- music (CD-player) or rhythmic (tambourine) accompaniment

Safety considerations

Not a dangerous activity, but make the group aware of everybody's movement capabilities - try not to bump into other movers.

Adaptations: easier

Do the coordination slowly, do it without walking, do it seated in a chair or a wheelchair - or follow a partner who is leading you.

Adaptations: harder

Do the coordination movement when walking faster forward or backward. Do it in pairs, facing each other like in a mirror, clapping on same or different places. Add more body parts. Very difficult: do the clapping between the steps (on the off-beat!).

AT HOME

The purpose of this activity is to develop motor control, coordination and strength in the hands and wrists using everyday activities around the home.

Explanation

These activities aim to utilise the home environment to develop physical skills and increase activity.

Sponge squeeze: put some water in a washing bowl or basin. Use a sponge to soak up the water, then squeeze it out using both hands, the dominant hand, and then the non-preferred hand. Try holding the sponge higher each time until the arm is fully extended above the bowl.



Wrist twist: place a washing cloth or dish towel in a bowl of water, or while standing at the kitchen sink or wash-hand basin. Take the wet cloth in both hands and twist the hands in opposite directions to squeeze out the water. Try with bent arms, and then with arms extended.



Brush off: begin in a seated position with a floor brush or mop handle held in both hands in front of the body. Start as low as possible on the handle, with fists clenched around the brush, one hand above the other. Release the brush with the bottom hand and

move it above the other hand and grasp the handle again. Repeat with the other hand (now bottom hand) and so on until the hands reach the top of the handle. Reverse the process and move back down the handle.

Side to side: Still seated, grasp the brush handle between both hands, arms extended in front. Pass the handle slowly from hand to hand, then more quickly. Move hands further apart and push the handle from one hand to the other (rocking). Catch and grasp the handle each time before passing back to the other hand.



Equipment & Organisation

Plastic washing bowls, sponges, face cloths, mop or floor brush.

Safety considerations

Participants should be in a stable seated or standing position before trying the activities.

Adaptations:

- Using the sponge or cloth, try wiping a flat surface (for example, the draining board) and squeeze out the water.
- Easier: perform squeezing or grasping movements without holding anything (hands only) before using a cloth or brush handle

ROCK CLIMBING

The purpose of this activity is to assist elderly/disabled persons in standing and walking securely, to improve mobilisation, balance, strength, **coordination** and endurance, especially for persons at risk of falling.

Explanation

The participants do different exercises while they are singing along the following text (Note that participants and their instructors can substitute any suitable song or music, or make one up as a group!):

Text 1 (Preparation, pause):

(translation from German into English)

On the way up to the mountain - there's a high rock, on the top - and the route up through the wall - let us climb together, all.

Exercises: Straighten up the body.

Refrain:

(1) *Right arm and left leg - reach them to the roof - stretch the body very high - and look up as proof.*

(2) *Left arm and right leg - they move together so - pull up the body - don't stay too low.*

(3) *Alternating right and left - climbing up high - change the sides step by step - don't ask me why!*

Exercises:

(1) Raise the right arm and left leg together and stretch your body (symbolize climbing up a wall).

(2) Raise the left arm and right leg and stretch your body. (3) Alternate these exercises together with the text and together with the music.

Equipment & Organisation

- music (cd-player), type march music + participants sing along specific texts, example taken from www.plejad.net/newsletter/hoerprobe_cd3.htm ("Ein Tag in der Natur: Sicher stehen, sicher gehen. Track 7 "Klettersteig") or <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radetzkmarsch>
- any group size or individual mover
- suitable indoor space
- a few chairs (if needed)

Safety considerations

Ensure that everyone has enough personal space.



Text 2 (pause):

We feel the rocks by feet and hands - see the country and the lands - we come closer to the goal - climbing further with body and soul.

Exercises: Straighten up the body and relax.

Refrain:

Same text and exercises as before.

Text 3 (pause):

And the summit is quite near - we are climbing without fear - as the sun is shining there - where we can look to everywhere.

Exercises: The participants straighten up their body and relax.

Refrain:

Same text and exercises as above.

Adaptations: easier

Frail persons who want to do the exercises in a standing position, hold on to chairs on the left and/or the right side or get assistance from a helper. Very frail or severely disabled persons should do the exercises in a sitting position.

Adaptations: harder

Do the exercises without any assistance and help.

TREAD STRONG

The purpose of this activity is to provide sensory stimulation and promote balance by walking on a variety of surfaces



Explanation

The participants walk across a path created from different types of surface. For example:

- wooden floor
- soft / hard mats
- rough matting, doormats
- different material taped to the floor, and Outdoor:
- grass
- sand

Wheelchair users can touch the surfaces with their bare feet, or stand up with support if possible (eg. a bar or wall) and march slowly on the spot.

Equipment & Organisation

A variety of surfaces used to create an indoor or outdoor path, for example, pillows, natural or artificial grass, sand, foam or sponge rubber, wood, metal, plastic, cloth material.

It may also help to have some chairs or bars which participants can use for support.

Safety considerations

Support bars for unsteady walkers or human assistance would be helpful.

People who need support footwear or who are unsteady should not remove their shoes.

Adaptations: easier

Use a level path without steps or undulations to provide maximum stability

Adaptations: harder

Follow the path with eyes closed.

Follow the path with eyes closed and try to guess what material you can feel.

Follow a path with undulations and changes in level.

Other ideas:

- Participants take turns to choose a surface, then the rest of the group walk or touch that area.
- The different surfaces can be placed in a progressive order, from very soft, to harder, and finally the concrete path.



QUESTION OF BALANCE

The purpose of this activity is to develop balance and posture control using a range of body parts.



Explanation

Participants find personal space in the activity area - they can be seated or standing.

Stage one: each person tries to achieve stillness - head still, neck relaxed, shoulders square to the front. Hips, knees and feet should also be square and in line if possible.

Using a bean bag, koosh ball, sponge or soft material, each participant uses different parts of their body to balance the object. For example, raise the arm to the front, with fingers extended and palms down. Balance the bean bag on the back of the hand. Try with the other arm. Then balance the object on the knees, shoulders, and finally head.



Equipment & Organisation

- Participants can be seated or standing.
- An indoor or outdoor space can be used.
- Bean bags, koosh balls, soft sponges, strips of soft material or scarves.

Safety considerations

No real safety implications, except awareness of others when moving around.

Adaptations: easier

A partner or helper can place the object on the body part once the person has achieved stillness.

Adaptations: harder

Introduce movement. Can participants balance the bean bag and move slowly around the space? Try moving more quickly. Seated participants can try turning and twisting while balancing the bean bag, or 'march' with the legs if possible.

RINGS AND BAGS

The purpose of this activity is to stimulate cognitive skills including recognition and recall of information; in this game: colours



Explanation

This activity aims to stabilise and/or slow down cognitive skill impairment.

In a circle of people, standing or sitting, put three different coloured rings (hoops) on the ground. Coloured chalk can also be used to create the target circles, or sheets of coloured paper or mats. Participants try to throw bean bags (or paper or wool balls) into the rings. Introduce colour recognition by indicating the colour of the target ring. This can be extended by asking participants to throw the bean bags into the same coloured target (eg. red bag into red hoop)

Equipment & Organisation

- Coloured rings, hoops, chalk circles, or coloured sheets of paper or mats.

- Beanbags, Koosh balls, wool balls, paper balls
- A circle formation, whether standing or seated, promotes better interaction amongst the participants.

Safety considerations

No major safety considerations. However, avoid using hard balls in case they deflect and cause injury.

Adaptations: easier

- Sit around a table with small rings or targets
- Increase options, eg choice of two colour targets
- Indicate by signal the correct target

Adaptations: harder

- use coloured balls to roll into the rings
- increase number of targets
- introduce sequences, eg red, then blue, then green, to increase recall challenge
- reduce verbal and other support

PLANETS GAME

The purpose of this activity is to throw, pass, catch, coordinate different tasks, maintain orientation, react - and have fun!



Explanation

The players form a circle, which symbolises the universe.

The players pass one ball around the circle in one direction: a planet on its way through the universe.

Then a second planet, another ball of same size and colour, enters the game and should be passed in the opposite direction round the circle.

A ball with another colour or other size enters the game. This ball symbolises an asteroid, which has no specific route. It can be passed to everyone in the circle. Bring as many balls (planets and asteroids) as possible into the game. Additionally you can change the direction of the route of the planets.

Equipment & Organisation

- any group size more than 4 persons
- gym or outdoor open area
- (soft) balls, 3-4 similar balls, but also some in different sizes and colours.



Safety considerations

Pass the ball to your neighbour only when he/she sees you and is expecting the ball.

Adaptations: easier

Assist players who are visually impaired (or blind) and give acoustic signs. To make the game easier, use bigger or soft balls. Or even begin with soft cushions or small pillows that are easier to grasp.

Adaptations: harder

The players keep in mind from whom they've got the ball and to whom they passed the ball in the circle. Then all the players move freely in the gym or the outdoor area and pass the ball in the same order like in

the circle. While moving in the room keep in view where your neighbours are and catch or pass on time. Start with one planet and if it works, increase the number of planets (pass in the original order) and/or asteroids (pass in any way), until the group cannot handle the number of balls any more. Take particular care for asteroids, those balls that can be thrown from everyone to everyone. If the game collapses, start again with one planet in the circle, maybe in the other direction.

"KUDDELMUDEL"

The purpose of this activity is to pass different objects from person to person according to specific rules - helping participants to coordinate tasks - and have fun!

Explanation

The players form a circle. The leader/instructor presents different objects in the centre of the circle. Each object is linked to a specific task: e.g. a small ball has to be passed on with the right hand to the right side into the next person's right hand; a big ball has to be passed on with the left hand to the left side into the next person's left hand. For example, a toy (eg. rubber ring) has to be put on the head of your neighbour to your right; a plastic cup which you place over your index finger has to be placed on your neighbour's index finger to your left; a short pole has to be passed under your thigh to your left by lifting your knee, and so on.



Equipment & Organisation

- any group size more than 4-5 persons
- gym or outdoor open area
- various balls and objects

Safety considerations

This game needs high concentration and retentiveness to execute the task correctly, but because of the complexity it will soon end in confusion and laughing ("kuddelmuddel")!

Adaptations: easier

Introduce just one task at a time and give time for practice. Weak or fragile people may be seated in the circle, or everyone sits to be on the same eye level.

Adaptations: harder

Any additional tasks or objects can be used, a time limit can be introduced, or specific language or actions linked to the task can be used.

Other ideas:

- Form two or more smaller circles and have a race!
- Use objects familiar to the participants, perhaps things that they bring.
- Use objects or tasks that relate to daily living skills.

ACTIVE AGEING ACTIVITY CARDS

ACTIVE 8!

EIGHT TIPS ON INCLUSIVE EXERCISE FOR OLDER DISABLED PEOPLE

There are many exercise and movement activities in which older disabled people who have learning, physical or sensory impairments can successfully take part. However, in order to enable people who have different abilities and differing skill levels to maximise their participation, some adaptation or modification may be necessary. Use these tips in conjunction with the generic material.

1. Communicate!

Do not underestimate the intelligence or ability of older disabled people. Talk with them - find out what they can do. Enable them to succeed and enjoy the activity.

2. Appropriateness of the task

Where, following consultation with support staff, relations & friends, and the individuals themselves, there are reasons that someone may not take part in the main activity, always provide a positive alternative rather than simply exclude an individual. For example, if a person, due to a balance activity, is unable to participate from a standing position, enable them to take part seated on a chair, and encourage them to use as much movement of their lower limbs as possible. Ensure that they are positioned where they can easily interact with the other participants.

3. Exercise tolerance

If you are uncertain about an individual's tolerance to exercise, alternate active and passive sequences.

4. Positioning

An important fundamental of inclusion is to ensure that each person is able to participate from a comfortable and safe position that optimises their involvement. For example by:

- achieving a balanced position, lying, seated or standing with or without support;
- providing support where necessary, using cushions, pillows, soft mats, physical assistance or a combination;
- varying positioning to suit the accomplishment of the desired skill, eg. movement with support, stillness without support.

5. Working with others

Agree with individuals the best way for them to both receive, and give, support, always taking into consideration and recognising that their personal space also includes mobility aids and other personal equipment.

Enable them to take the lead or prominent role in partner work. This may be in a physical way, or by directing the movement of a partner by voice, gesture or mechanical means.

6. Achieving disengagement

Instructors and participants should work together to provide opportunities for older people who have mobility impairments to participate away from their supporting aids and equipment, for example, being able to get out of a wheelchair onto a mat. Where this is inappropriate, try to include movement and interaction at a variety of physical levels - vary the eye-line of the participants to ensure that the activity works for seated and lying participants as well as those who are ambulant.

7. Movement

Make sure that participants are aware of the different movement capabilities of everyone in the group. Use differences in the way people move, or react to the movement of others, in a positive way within any activity. For example, for participants who rely upon sound cues, include sequences that concentrate everyone's attention on the importance of listening skills.

8. Safety

- Consider the safety of people who have a sensory impairment. Will they see or hear start, stop and safety signals?
- Some older disabled people will be vulnerable to physical contact. This can be due to variations in mobility, balance and reaction time. Make everyone aware of this.
- If wheelchair users get out of their chairs to participate, use mats or soft floor coverings for them to sit on.
- Work with therapists, support staff and the individuals themselves to develop a positive policy towards manual handling where this is necessary to ensure inclusion. Agree upon, and use, transfers (eg from chair to floor) that are safe for everyone.

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TORSO AND LOWER BODY STRETCHING ACTIVITIES

The purpose of this activity is to help maintain flexibility in the muscles and joints, to relieve tension and to prevent injuries and soreness.

Explanation: stretch on both sides

1. Middle back stretch

Stand with hands on hips. Gently twist torso at waist until stretch is felt. Keep knees slightly flexed.



2. Calf stretch

Stand a little way from wall and lean on it with forearms, head resting on hands. Place right foot in front of you, leg bent, left leg straight behind you. Slowly

move hips forward until you feel stretch in calf of left leg. Keep left heel flat and toes pointed straight.

3. Side Lying Quadriceps Stretch

Lie on mat on left side. Left arm extended straight out, head resting on left arm. Keep left leg straight. Bend right knee, and reach back with right hand grasping right ankle, pressing heel towards buttocks. Feel mild tension in front of thigh.



3a. Prone Quadriceps Stretch

Lie on mat, face down, legs out straight. Bend right knee up behind you as you reach back and grasp right ankle with both hands, pulling the heel towards the buttocks. Feel mild tension in front of thigh.

3b. Standing Quadriceps Stretch

****ADVANCED**

Stand holding wall or chair for balance. Bend right knee up behind you as you reach back and grasp right ankle with right hand, keeping the knee close to the body, pulling the heel towards the buttocks. Feel mild tension in front of thigh.



4. Inner thigh, groin stretches

Stand with feet pointed straight ahead, a little more than shoulder-width apart. Bend right knee slightly and move left hip downward toward right knee. If necessary, hold on to something (chair, etc.) for balance.

5. Side of hip, hamstrings stretches

Sit on floor with right leg straight out in front. Bend left leg, cross left foot over, place outside right knee. Pull left knee across body toward opposite shoulder



6. Lower back, side of hip, and neck stretches

Sit on floor with left leg straight out in front. Bend right leg, cross right foot over, place outside left knee. Bend left elbow and rest it outside right knee. Place right hand behind hips on floor. Turn head over right shoulder, rotate upper body to the right



7. Back of leg and lower back stretch (Seated Hamstring Stretch)

Sit on mat with right leg extended out straight, knee soft (slight bend) and right foot flexed, left leg bent, with left foot resting next to inside of right leg. Lean forward from the hips and reach for your ankle. Feel mild tension in back of upper right leg. Use a towel if you cannot easily reach your feet.



7a. Supine Hamstring Stretch

Lie on mat with knees bent, feet flat on mat. Lift right leg, with leg straight, knee soft (slightly bent), foot flexed. With both hands reach around right leg. Keep hips to the mat, as you gently pull right leg toward your body. Feel mild tension in back of upper right leg.



7b. Standing Hamstring Stretch

Stand with feet shoulder width apart, knees soft (slight bend), toes pointing straight ahead. Bend forward at the hips and reach hands around the ankles. Feel mild tension in back of upper right leg.



8. Prone Abdominal Stretch

Lie face down on mat with palms down on mat, directly under shoulders, toes pointed. Exhale as you extend arms straight, keeping head in line with the spine. Feel mild tension through the abdominal region.



9. Shoulders, arms, hands, feet and ankles stretches

Lie on floor, extend arms overhead, keep legs straight. Reach arms and legs in opposite directions

Equipment & organization

- Loose comfortable clothing is best.
- Gym, indoor or outdoor space, preferably with walls for support if needed
- Gym mat and a towel

Safety considerations

- The right way to stretch is slow and relaxed. DO NOT BOUNCE. This can actually cause you to pull the muscle you are trying to stretch.
- You should stretch to the point of "MILD TENSION" or "PAIN EDGE". If you over-stretch you will also cause damage. Ease back if the stretch feels painful.
- BREATHE slowly and naturally. Do not hold your breathe while stretching.
- Hold the stretches for a minimum of 10-15 seconds each. Relax the stretch. Stretch one or two more times with each stretch. Try to stretch a little further with each stretch. STRETCH BOTH SIDES of the body.

Adaptations: easier - see each exercise

In addition:

- many of the exercises can be adapted for seated positions, eg. in Stretches 3-3b (Quadriceps), the participant can sit in a chair and bend one leg back under the chair - leaning back slightly gives a quadriceps stretch
- small towels or short pieces of rope can be used to assist with some stretches, eg., in Stretch 7, the Seated Hamstring Stretch, the participant can hook a towel held in both hands over the toes and pull gently towards their chest to create the stretch.

Adaptations: harder - see each exercise

NECK, HEAD AND UPPER BODY STRETCHING ACTIVITIES

The purpose of this activity is to help maintain flexibility in your muscles and joints, to relieve tension and to prevent injuries and soreness.

Explanation: stretch on both sides



1. Neck Roll (Stretches for sides and the back of neck)

- Roll your head to the right. Stay in this position and feel the stretch on the left side.
- Roll your head to the front again. Now, roll your head to the left. Stay in this position and feel the stretch on the right side.
- Drop your chin to your chest. Stay in this position and feel the stretch in the back of your neck.
- Do not roll your head backward! You could damage the vertebrae at the top of your spinal column.



2. Neck Holds

Sit tall in a chair. Holding side of chair with left hand, reach right hand over the head, placing right hand on left ear. Drop right ear down to right shoulder, stopping when you feel mild tension.



4. Shoulder, middle back, arms, hands, fingers, and wrist stretches

Interlace or touch fingers, and turn palms in or out. Extend arms in front at shoulder height



3. Side of shoulder and back of upper arm stretches

Stand or sit and place right hand on left upper arm. With right hand, pull left arm across chest towards right shoulder.



5. Triceps, top of shoulders, and waist stretches

Keep knees slightly flexed. Stand or sit with arms overhead. Hold elbow with hand of opposite arm. Pull elbow behind head gently as you slowly lean to side until mild stretch is felt



6. Doorway Stretch

Stand in a doorway. Bend elbows to a 90 degree angle and place forearms against the door frame. Lean forward, feeling mild tension in the front of shoulders. Hold 15 seconds.



7. Kneeling Superman Reach

Kneel down on mat. Sit back moving buttocks toward the heels with arms extending out in front of body, elbows straight and palms pressing down into mat. Feel mild tension through upper arms and shoulders. Hold 15 seconds.

Equipment & organisation

- Loose comfortable clothing is best.
- Gym, indoor or outdoor space with walls for support if needed
- Gym mat and a towel

Safety considerations

- The right way to stretch is slow and relaxed. DO NOT BOUNCE. This can actually cause you to pull the muscle you are trying to stretch.
- You should stretch to the point of "MILD TENSION" or "PAIN EDGE". If you overstretch you will also cause damage. Ease back if the stretch feels painful.
- BREATHE slowly and naturally. Do not hold your breathe while stretching.
- Hold the stretch for a minimum of 10-15 seconds each. Relax the stretch. Stretch one or two more times with each stretch. Try to stretch a little further with each stretch. STRETCH BOTH SIDES of the body.

Adaptations:

easier - see each exercise

In addition:

- many of the exercises can be adapted for seated positions, eg. a chair can be placed in a doorway for Stretch 6, the doorway stretch
- small towels or short pieces of rope can be used to assist with some stretches, eg. in Stretch 4, (shoulder, middle back, arms, hands, fingers, and wrist stretch), a towel can be held in both hands instead of interlacing the fingers.

Adaptations:

harder - see each exercise

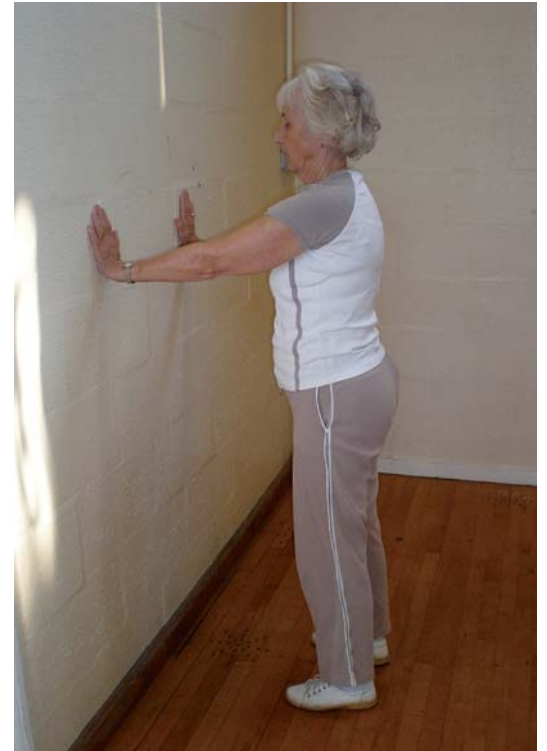
PUSH - AWAY

The purpose of this activity is to improve muscular strength of the upper limbs.

Explanation

Warm up: perform shoulder lifts and circles.

Push away wall: Stand half a step away from a wall and lean your torso until your chest is near the wall. Place your hands slightly more than shoulder width apart, flex your elbows, pause briefly and push away from the wall. Return, with control, to start position.



In seated position perform:

- side lateral raises of the arms, slightly flexed at the elbows lifting no higher than shoulder height
- flex (bend) the elbows up until the palms touch the shoulders
- extend the arms to the back of the body
- extend the arms to the sky starting at shoulder height.

Equipment:

- Straight-backed chair
- resistance bands
- dumbbells or anything that can be used as resistance (a bean bag).

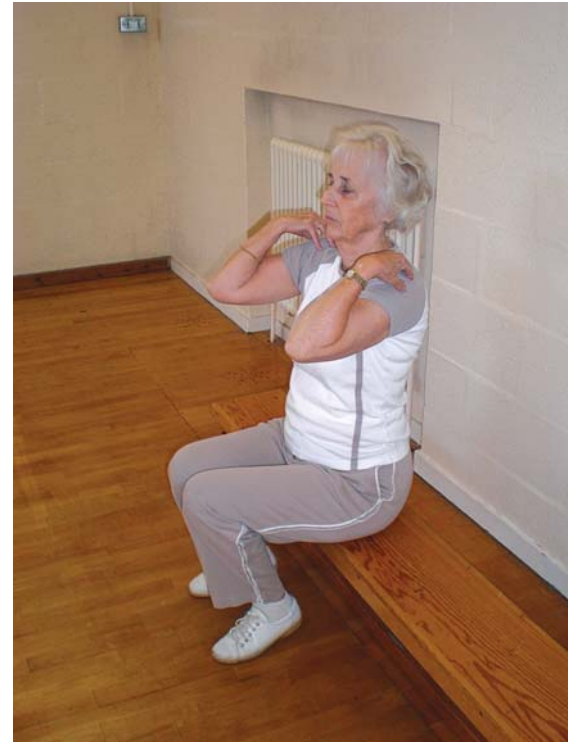
Sit and maintain a slow and stable rhythm throughout all range of motion. Perform 1 - 3 set 8 - 12 repetitions. Rest between sets for - 2-3 min.

Safety considerations

Check for a position that assures a stable body position and for a regular rhythm of breathing while exercising. Avoid using items that you cannot hold in your grip (eg. large food tins).

Equipment & Organisation

Establish a stable body position, whether standing or seated.

**Adaptations: easier**

The push off the wall activity can begin by just flexing and extending the elbows without leaning or creating any resistance.

Perform the movements without any or minimum resistance e.g. holding a sponge.

Adaptations: harder

Increase the distance from the wall

Lean against a table's edge.

Increase the resistance, eg. by increasing the weight that you are holding

In a seated position, use resistance bands to perform the above exercises or stand with feet standing on the band, and perform upright rowing and elbow flexes. Progress to holding both band-ends in one hand while stepping on the band.

If you want to progress, first add more repetitions then add more resistance. These activities could also be performed with weight-stack resistance machines

Other ideas:

Start by establishing range of motion without any resistance. Increase the resistance used progressively and do not exercise on consecutive days.

In order to increase motivation, these exercises can be integrated in social group activities e.g. "dice" warm up.

BODY STRENGTH

The purpose of this activity is to improve muscular strength of the abdomen and the lower and upper back



Explanation

Curl-ups: lie on the back on a mat or carpeted floor. Bend one knee half way, place the hands across the chest and smoothly roll the body forward to raise it just high enough to clear shoulder blades off the floor. Pause and then slowly return to the starting position.

Prone leg lifts: in prone position (lying on the front) perform small leg lifts - knees can be either flexed or extended.

Buttocks squeezes: alternatively squeeze and relax the buttock muscles



Equipment & Organisation

Establish a stable body position, whether standing or seated.

Equipment:

- Straight-backed chair
- foam mat

Maintain a slow and stable rhythm throughout the full range of motion. Perform 1-3 sets of 8-

15 repetitions. Rest between sets for 2-3 min and start again when your breathing rhythm is normal and relaxed.

Safety considerations

Maintain a regular rhythm of breathing while exercising. Move head, neck and shoulders as one unit. Keep your neck relaxed - do not curl or flex it.

Adaptations: easier***In curl-ups:***

- just lift your head only off the floor and keep your forearms across your chest
- have a pillow or cushion under your head and upper back - just raise forward a little from this position

Adaptations: harder***Curl-ups:***

place hands loosely behind head to maintain neutral head position, and/or position your calves on a chair and perform diagonal curl-ups.

Prone leg lifts: Place arms straight in front of your head on the floor and alternate in lifting one after the other by simultaneously raising your head and upper part of your body. Roll to the side and place hands above head touching the floor and lift both legs; progressively straighten your knees. Try to maintain a balanced position for as long as you feel comfortable.

Buttocks squeezes: first lift your buttocks off the floor by engaging the abdomen muscles and then progress to buttocks squeezes.

If you want to progress first add more repetitions then add more sets. These activities could also be performed with weight-stack resistance machines

Other ideas:

In order to increase motivation these exercises can be integrated in social group activities e.g. dice warm-up.

LOWER BODY STRENGTH

The purpose of this activity is to improve muscular strength of the lower limbs.



Explanation

Standing squats - Stand with a relaxed spine and the feet shoulder width apart. Slowly start to bend the legs, with hips back, keeping the body weight centred over the heels. Lower to 90° of knee flexion, pause and slowly return to the starting (standing) position.

Heel raise - Stand with a relaxed spine and the feet shoulder width apart. Slowly lift the body vertically by raising the heels up until full pain free range of motion is achieved. Pause and then slowly lower to the starting position.



Equipment & Organisation

Establish a stable body position when standing or seated.

Equipment:

- straight-backed chair
- resistance bands
- small dumbbells or anything that can be used as ankle weight (bean bag).

Maintain a slow and stable rhythm throughout

the full range of motion. Perform 1 - 3 sets of 8 - 12 repetitions. Rest between sets for 2-3 min.

Safety considerations

Check for a position that ensures body stability and follow a regular rhythm of breathing while exercising. Keep head up and eyes fixed straight ahead. Avoid using items that you cannot easily hold in your grip (eg. large food tins)

Safety considerations

Check for a position that ensures body stability and follow a regular rhythm of breathing while exercising. Keep head up and eyes fixed straight ahead. Avoid using items that you cannot easily hold in your grip (eg. large food tins)

Adaptations: easier

Perform the squats and use a table or a wall for balance support

Reduce leg angle on squat, eg. only bend 45°

In seated position perform:

- heel raise with both feet together
- knee lifts for one leg at a time
- knee extensions for one leg at a time

Adaptations: harder - more demanding

Squat: gradually increase the bend of the knees up until 90° is reached

Squat and heel raise:

- combine the squat and heel raise into one exercise
- hold a weight with both hands and gradually increase it.

In the seated position add resistance by:

- flexing your ankle and put ankle weights or a bean bag in your sock
- attaching a resistance band to your ankle.



If you want to progress first add more repetitions then add more resistance (weight or depth of squat). These activities could also be performed with weight-stack resistance machines.

Other ideas:

Start by establishing range of motion without any resistance. Progressively increase the resistance used and do not exercise on consecutive days.

In order to increase motivation these exercises can be integrated in social group activities e.g. dice warm-up

RIPPLES AND WAVES

The purpose of this activity is to conclude the activity in a relaxed manner.



Explanation

The group can stand or sit in a circle, everyone facing in.

Group Squeeze

Each person takes the hand of the person on either side (or touch a shoulder). When the leader, or one of the group, calls 'Squeeze', everyone gently squeezes the hands of the person on either side.

Ripple squeeze

This time, start with one person in the circle. They gently squeeze the hand or shoulder of the person on their left.

That person squeezes the hand of the person on their left, and so on round the circle. On reaching the start point, change directions, or the next person in the circle starts the squeeze.

Mexican wave

Starting by asking the group to raise and lower a hand or arm in unison - a drum or tambourine could be used to achieve a rhythm. Once everyone can do this, start the wave at one point in the circle. Each person raises their arm in turn on the drumbeat, right around the circle.

Equipment & Organisation

- People can sit or stand - if there are large numbers, break into smaller circles
- The games can be played indoors or outdoors

Safety considerations

- Simply be aware of over-exertion or over-excitement.

Adaptations: easier

A bigger circle means more rest between movement (but longer to remember!)

Adaptations: harder

Add different movements to the Mexican Wave - perhaps a different movement to the previous person. Really hard - play as an add-on - each person performs the movements of those preceding them and adds theirs!

RELAXING TOUCH

The purpose of this activity is to provide the participants with a relaxation exercise that they can perform in a group or alone.



Explanation

Participants get into pairs and are asked to give a 'massage' to their partner. They begin by massaging the shoulders and back before moving to the arms and legs of their partner. The person giving the massage can sit behind their partner. Initially, equipment can be used (see below and 'Adaptations').

The idea of this exercise is to aid relaxation, but also to help people to understand the responses of their body. They will also experience issues of personal space, for example, moving into another's space (the massager) or accepting another into their space (the massaged). A massager tries to adapt their

technique to the needs of the other person, responding to their comments.

The person that is being massaged tries to achieve stillness and a relaxed state. Participants begin the exercise with a large massage tool, such as volleyball, and roll it gently over their partner's shoulders and back, before slowly proceeding to smaller tools, such as special massage balls or tennis balls. Let the participants observe their reactions to different materials. You can finish the exercise by direct massage without any object - if the participants feel comfortable with this.

Equipment & Organisation

- Chairs, or possibly mats to lie on
- Different size balls and materials
- Bean bags, koosh balls, soft sponges

Safety considerations

Ensure that participants are in a safe and comfortable position. The exercise can be performed while seated, standing or lying. For some lying face-down will not be recommended. The techniques used should be delicate - gentle broad strokes initially (effleurage).

Nobody should be forced to do the exercise - but those who initially do not feel comfortable should be motivated to try. Massage should be gentle and never hurt. Participants should communicate immediately if the massage gives them bad sensations.

Other ideas:

This exercise can be performed in the bigger group in the closed circle- one person is massaging the back of the person in front of him. When exercise is done in couples you can ask the

one that is being massaged to close his or her eyes and try to guess with which objects she or he is being massaged.

Inform the participants that they can try to massage themselves.

Adaptations:

This exercise can be adapted according to the feeling of comfort of the participants. Some persons will feel very comfortable and those can be massaged without any equipment. The massage can start by using equipment, like massaging balls, in order to avoid direct contact with the body. Later if the participants feel more comfortable, they can massage their partner using their hands. Eventually, some participants may prefer to lie or stand - depending on the situation and the condition.

Participants can also use small balls to massage their own legs and arms, rolling them over the limbs.