

Hip exercises for older people



Important safety notice: exercise with caution

These exercises may not be suitable for you. Consult a health professional if you are unsure. Stop the exercise if you are feeling any new or increasing pain, feel dizzy, clammy, or shortness of breath. Seek medical assistance immediately if symptoms persist.

Hip exercises

You can perform strengthening exercises for your hips safely and easily in your home. Exercises can be modified if you have poor balance or find standing too difficult. It is best to start with exercises you can perform while seated or lying down. This way you can improve your leg strength before moving on to standing exercises.

Level 1 - Lying down exercises

Straight Leg Raise

This exercise helps strengthen your hip flexors and the muscles on the front of your thigh.

To perform this exercise:

- Lie flat on your back with one leg straight and the other knee bent with your foot on the mattress or floor.
- Keep your stomach tight and gently brace throughout the movement.
- Lift your straight leg as high as you feel is comfortable.
- Slowly lower and return to the starting position.
- Repeat with the other leg.

Ensure there is no discomfort in your lower back when completing this exercise.



Bridge

This exercise is used to improve leg stability by strengthening the hips and backside muscles. We use these muscles every day to move forward when walking, stepping up when climbing stairs, and standing up from a seated position.

To perform this exercise:

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat.
- Lift your hips off the ground ensuring your hips are balanced.
- Squeeze the muscles of your backside as you lift your hips up.
- Try not to arch your back.
- Hold for a few seconds at the top, then slowly lower your hips back down.
- Do this in a controlled manner.



Clam Shell

This exercise helps to strengthen the muscles that surround your hips. These muscles help stabilise your hips and keep you balanced.

To perform this exercise:

- Lie on your side, with legs stacked on top of each other and knees bent.
- Rest your head on your lower arm or a pillow, and use your top arm to steady your frame.
- Be sure that your hipbones are stacked on top of one another and try to avoid rocking backward.
- Keep your stomach tight to stabilise your spine and pelvis.
- With your feet touching, raise your upper knee as high as you can without rocking your hips.
- Slowly lower your knee and repeat.



Level 2 – Seated exercises

Hip Marching

This exercise strengthens our hip flexor muscles. It can help maintain or improve your lower body strength and ensures you are able to lift your foot off the ground.

To perform this exercise:

- Sitting up tall with your feet flat on the floor.
- Your hands can rest at the sides of your chair, or wherever is most comfortable.
- Lift up your right knee as high as comfortable, then lower it.
- Alternate lifting your knees.
- Ensure you perform this movement in a slow and controlled manner.



Hip Opener

This exercise can help improve your hip mobility and abductor strength. These muscles are used when standing, walking, and performing tasks like getting in and out of cars.

To perform this exercise:

- Sitting up tall in your chair with your knees together.
- Slowly push your knees out to the side and then bring them back together in a controlled motion.
- Do not rush the exercise, and maintain an upright posture throughout.
- If this is too easy, perform this exercise with a resistance band wrapped around your knees.



Hip Squeeze

This exercise can help improve your hip mobility and adductor strength. These muscles are important for hip stability during different movements like walking and sitting.

To perform this exercise:

- Sitting up tall, shuffle forward closer to the edge of your chair.
- Place a cushion or a rolled-up towel between your knees.
- Bring your feet together, ensuring they are flat on the floor.
- Whilst lightly holding the cushion with your hands, squeeze the cushion using your knees.
- Hold this for 5 seconds and relax.



Level 3 – Standing exercises

Hip Marching

Similar to performing in a seated position, this is a great exercise to maintain or improve your leg strength and mobility. It also adds a component of balance and stability.

To perform this exercise:

- Begin by standing tall beside a wall or gently holding on to a sturdy chair.
- Raise your left leg, lifting your knee toward your chest.
- Alternate legs and complete this exercise in a controlled manner.
- Try not to hold your breath.



Important safety notice

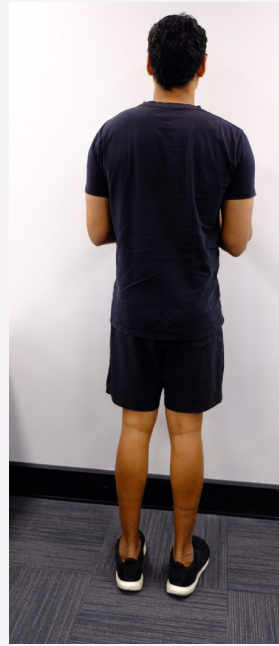
Make sure to perform standing exercises next to something stable. For example, a railing, table, or chair. This will provide you support so that you do not lose your balance.

Side Kicks

This exercise is used to maintain or improve your leg strength and specifically targets the muscles on the side of your hips.

To perform this exercise:

- Stand tall and hold onto a chair or wall for stability.
- Start by bringing both feet together.
- Slowly raise one leg off the ground and away from your body, kicking out to the side.
- Return to the start position.
- Switch legs and repeat on the opposite side.
- Avoid leaning to one side.



Back Kicks

This exercise is used to maintain or improve your leg strength and specifically targets the muscles of your backside.

To perform this exercise:

- Stand tall and hold onto a chair or wall for stability.
- Keep your legs straight throughout the movement.
- Extend your right leg back, keeping your toes on the ground. Your legs will create a triangle-like position.
- Keep your stomach tight and try to avoid arching your back.
- Return your foot to the starting position.
- Repeat for the other leg.



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