THRIVING SENIOR

Helping seniors live better, one tip at a time

5-Minute Seated Fitness Routine

Build strength and stability without standing up

- [ ] **Seated Marching: 30 seconds**

Sit tall with your feet flat on the floor and your hands resting on your thighs. Lift your right knee as high as comfortably possible, then lower it and lift your left knee, alternating in a steady marching rhythm. Keep your back straight and your core gently engaged throughout. This warms up the hip flexors, activates the calves, and gets blood moving.

- [ ] **Chair Squats: 8-10 repetitions**

Scoot forward to the edge of your chair so your feet are flat on the floor, hip-width apart. Lean slightly forward from your hips, then press through your heels to rise to a standing position. Slowly lower yourself back down until you just touch the seat, then rise again. Focus on a controlled descent rather than dropping. This strengthens the quadriceps, glutes, and hamstrings.

- [ ] **Seated Leg Extensions: 10 repetitions each leg**

Sit back fully in your chair with good posture. Straighten your right leg by lifting your foot until your leg is parallel to the floor, hold for two seconds, then slowly lower it. Complete all repetitions on the right before switching to the left. Keep the movement slow and deliberate. This exercise directly targets the quadriceps and helps stabilize the knee joint.

- [ ] **Forward Arm Circles: 15 seconds each direction**

Extend both arms straight out to your sides at shoulder height. Make slow, controlled circles about the size of a dinner plate, rotating forward for 15 seconds, then reverse the direction for another 15 seconds. Keep your shoulders relaxed and away from your ears. Arm circles warm up the shoulder joint, improve range of motion, and stimulate circulation in the upper body.

- [ ] **Seated Row: 12 repetitions**

Sit tall and extend both arms straight forward at shoulder height, palms facing each other. Pull your elbows back as if rowing a boat, squeezing your shoulder blades together at the end of each pull. Hold for one second, then slowly extend your arms forward again. You can use a resistance band looped around a table leg for added challenge. This movement strengthens the upper back, rear shoulders, and biceps.

- [ ] **Torso Twists: 10 repetitions each side**

Sit upright near the edge of your chair with your feet flat on the floor. Cross your arms over your chest or place your hands on your shoulders. Rotate your upper body slowly to the right as far as is comfortable, hold for one second, then rotate to the left. Keep your hips and knees facing forward throughout the movement. Torso twists strengthen the obliques and improve spinal rotation used in daily activities.

☐ Ankle Rolls: 10 circles each direction, each ankle

Lift your right foot a few inches off the floor and slowly rotate your ankle in full circles, 10 times clockwise and 10 times counterclockwise. Lower it and repeat with the left foot. Keep the movement large and deliberate. Ankle circles improve joint mobility and stimulate circulation in the lower legs, reducing stiffness and swelling.

☐ Shoulder Rolls: 10 repetitions

Sit tall with your arms relaxed at your sides. Slowly roll both shoulders forward in large circles, lifting them toward your ears, rolling them back, and pressing them down. Complete five rolls forward, then reverse direction for five rolls backward. Move slowly and breathe steadily. Shoulder rolls release tension in the neck and upper back and improve posture by activating the muscles between the shoulder blades.

☐ Seated Heel Raises: 15 repetitions

Plant both feet flat on the floor directly beneath your knees. Press through the balls of your feet to raise both heels as high as possible, contracting your calf muscles at the top. Slowly lower your heels back to the floor. Repeat for 15 repetitions at a controlled pace. Seated heel raises are one of the most effective exercises for stimulating the calf-muscle pump and improving venous blood return from the lower legs.

☐ Deep Belly Breathing: 5 slow breaths

Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly. Inhale slowly through your nose for a count of four, allowing your belly to rise first before your chest expands. Exhale through your mouth for a count of six, letting the belly fall. Repeat five times. This activates the diaphragm, calms the nervous system, improves oxygen exchange, and serves as both a warm-down and a moment of mindful awareness.

☐ Daily Check-Off Chart: Track every session

Print this chart and post it somewhere you will see it every day. At the end of each session, place a checkmark or an X in the box for that date. After seven days, review your streak. Research shows that visual tracking significantly improves exercise adherence. Aim for at least five completed sessions per week, and celebrate every full week of consistency.

What to Do Next

Once you have completed your five minutes, spend 60 seconds sitting quietly, breathing deeply, and noticing how your body feels — warmer, looser, and more alert. As this routine becomes easier over the next few weeks, try adding a second round of the circuit to build toward a ten-minute session. If you experience any pain, dizziness, or unusual shortness of breath during exercise, stop immediately and contact your healthcare provider.

Print this page. Work through one box at a time. Every box you check is one more layer of protection.