

Let's get functional

Functional exercises train your muscles to work together and prepare them for daily tasks by simulating common movements you might do.

As a result, they can make it easier and safer to perform everyday activities, such as carrying shopping bags.

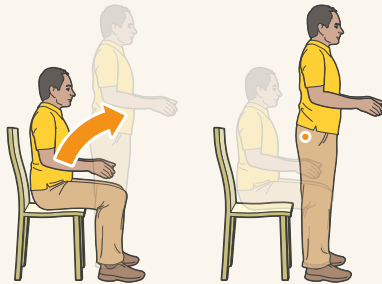
By including functional exercises as part of your regular physical activity, they can help to make everyday activities easier, reduce your risk of injury and improve your quality of life. It is especially beneficial for older adults and those who are less mobile as it helps to improve balance, agility and muscle strength, which helps to reduce the risk of falls.

Here are some simple functional exercises for you to try at home. Aim to do each exercise eight to 12 times, then take a short break of up to a minute before repeating one or two more times (so you do two to three sets).

As with all new exercise programmes, if you haven't exercised for some time or have health problems, it's a good idea to check with your doctor before starting.

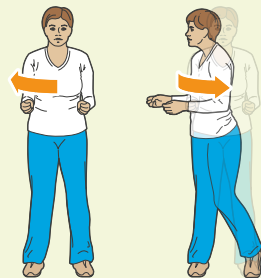
SQUAT

Sit upright in a sturdy chair, with your feet firmly planted on the floor, about hip-width apart. Keeping your back flat, push through your heels to stand up, while squeezing your bottom. If you can, don't use your hands to help you push up. Slowly return to a seated position and repeat.



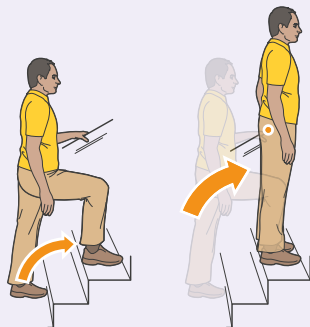
ROTATE

Stand upright with your feet firmly planted on the floor, about hip-width apart. Keeping your elbows tucked in to your sides, lift your lower arms so they are parallel with the floor. Rotate your upper body and arms as far as you can to the left - your right leg may also turn and your right heel may lift off the floor. Hold for two seconds and then return to the centre. Repeat on the right side. Repeat both sides.



LUNGE

If you have stairs in your home, stand at the bottom of the stairs, facing upwards and place your hand on the rail for support. Lift your right foot and place it on the second step - if this is too high, try the first step instead. Pushing through the whole foot, straighten your right leg, while squeezing your bottom. Then bring your left foot up to the same step. Repeat with the left leg. Repeat on both sides.



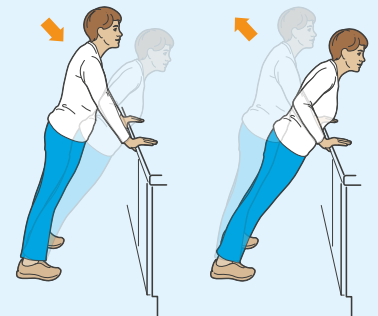
BEND AND LIFT

Stand upright facing the seat of a chair, with your feet firmly planted on the floor, about hip-width apart. Keeping your back flat, lean forward to lift a weight (like a bag of flour) off the chair seat - allow your knees to bend as much as needed. While holding the weight, return to the standing position while squeezing your bottom. Repeat to return the weight to the chair.



PUSH

Stand upright facing a kitchen counter (make sure it is clean and that your hands won't slip) - a stride away from the counter - with your feet firmly planted on the floor, about hip-width apart. Keeping your arms straight, place your hands on the edge of the counter, wider than shoulder-width apart. Bend your elbows and slowly move your body towards the counter, keeping your legs and torso in a straight line, until your stomach lightly touches the edge of the counter (or as far as you are able to safely and comfortably go). Then push through your hands to straighten your arms into the starting position. Repeat.



PULL

Stand upright facing a kitchen counter - a stride away from the counter - with your feet firmly planted on the floor, about hip-width apart. Place your left hand on the edge of the counter for support and hold a weight in your right hand, like a bottle of water. Keeping your knees soft and your back straight, bend forward from the hips. Pull the weight towards your ribs by lifting your elbow so it points towards the ceiling, focusing on squeezing between the shoulder blades. Straighten your arm, returning it to the starting position. Repeat, then swap to the other arm.

