

# STRENGTH EXERCISES TO SUPPORT YOUR WALKING

For heart information and support, call our Helpline on 13 11 12 or visit [heartfoundation.org.au](http://heartfoundation.org.au)

## Why is strength important:

**Physical activity is good medicine.** Being active on most days will help you to perform everyday tasks and remain independent for longer. It can help to boost your energy, think more clearly, manage blood pressure, reduce stress and anxiety and leads to a healthy heart.

Building strength into your exercise regime will help to keep your muscles, joints and bones healthy and strong.

## How much:

Aim to do strength exercises two times a week, along with walking daily.

Gradually build from Beginner to Advanced. Reps are the number of times you complete a single exercise. Completing several reps of a specific exercise in a row is called a set. Remember, it is okay to rest in-between different exercises and sets.

**Beginner:** 1 set of 6 reps

**Intermediate:** 2 sets of 10 reps

**Advanced:** 3 sets of 10 reps

## Tips:

Most of these exercises can be done seated or standing.

- It is important to keep hydrated, water is best.
- If you are outside don't forget to practice sun-safety and slip, slop, slap.
- Wear comfortable shoes and clothing.
- Stop if you experience pain or discomfort and seek advice from your GP.

The Heart Foundation suggests only participating in the recommended exercises to the extent that your personal physical capability allows. The Heart Foundation does not accept any liability, including for any injury, loss or damage, resulting from your participation in the recommended exercises. Participant discretion is advised.

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### MARCHING ON THE SPOT

#### Technique:

Lift one foot from the floor, placing it back down whilst lifting the opposite foot from the floor and back down.

#### Repeat.

#### Make this harder by:

Increase the speed.

Swing your opposite arm to leg.

Or, if seated try standing.

#### Benefit:

An easy way to build up strength alongside the added benefit of improving your cardiovascular and walking endurance.



### CALF RAISES

#### Technique:

Start with both feet flat on the ground, raise your heels so only your toes are touching the ground (if standing you can lean against a wall or hold a chair), hold at the top for 2 seconds and slowly lower so both feet are flat on the ground.

#### Repeat.

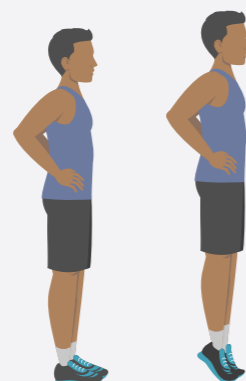
#### Make this harder by:

Holding for 2-4 seconds.

Or, if seated try standing.

#### Benefit:

A good exercise to maintain ankle flexibility and blood flow to your lower limbs. Also to strengthen calf, ankle and feet muscles. Lower body muscles and joints are extremely important for walking.



### SHOULDER RAISES

#### Technique:

Sitting tall in your chair with both feet flat on the floor, counting to three - simultaneously inhale and take both shoulders up towards your ears.

Counting to three and exhale drawing your shoulders back down.

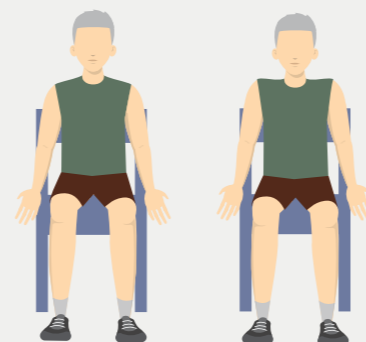
#### Repeat.

#### Make this harder by:

If seated try standing.

#### Benefit:

A great way to relieve tension in the neck and shoulders. Posture is key to good walking form. Shoulders should be down and back, chin up, eyes looking forward and spine straight.



### SIDE LEG SWINGS (Lateral)

#### Technique:

Start standing behind a chair, holding the chair for balance and support.

Start with your feet shoulder width apart, tuck your tummy in to keep your core tight, (this will help keep your back upright and straight).

Take your right leg out to the side, 6 times, don't rush the movement.

Bring your right leg back to the centre and take your left leg out 6 times.

#### Make this harder by:

Take away the chair.

Increase the number of swings on each side.

#### Benefit:

A great exercise for hip mobility and to maintain strength in your backside, which will help you to maintain balance when standing and walking.



### CHAIR SQUAT (Sit to stand)

#### Technique:

Start standing with your feet shoulder width apart, tuck your tummy in to keep your core tight, (this will help keep your back upright and straight).

Begin the movement by bending at your knees and sitting back with your hips until your backside sits on the chair. Return to standing position.

#### Repeat.

#### Make this harder by:

Hold in squat position just above the chair (try not to touch or rest on the chair).

#### Benefit:

A wonderful functional exercise to help with mobility and stability of the three main joints used when walking; the hip, knee and ankle joints. Also a great exercise to maintain and strengthen muscles in your legs and backside.



### ARM CURL

#### Technique:

Starting with your feet flat on the floor and arms down by the sides of your body with palms facing forwards.

Move your palms upwards aiming to reach an inch from your shoulders.

Keep your elbows by the side of your torso.

#### Make this harder by:

Add weight.

#### Benefit:

Keeping your upper arms strong allows you to complete daily tasks and maintain independence for longer. Swinging your arms can also assist you to increase your bodies intensity when you walk.



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