

**Just Move!**

# Physical Activity and Exercise Ideas for people Living with Dementia



Created by Mental Health Physiotherapists: 2021

## Introduction

Being active is good for your physical and mental wellbeing. It can change how you feel and how you cope with stress.

Dementia can affect your physical health, movement, and mobility, as well as your memory.

This book has been developed by Physiotherapists to encourage you to keep moving at any stage of dementia. It will give you and the people around you affected by dementia, ideas of things that you can do to stay active.

### **These activities can help you to**

- Do the things you enjoy.
- Improve your mood.
- Remain independent.
- Stay mobile.
- Reduce your risk of falling.

We want to inspire you to live well with dementia. And we want you to inspire us!

Share your own tips and ideas on staying active with dementia with us on twitter by adding **#Justmove** to your tweets.

## National Guidelines

Be active for at least **150 minutes** at moderate intensity per week

Try swimming, cycling, or brisk walking

**OR**  
(or a combination of both)

Be active for at least **75 minutes** at vigorous intensity per week

Try running, stairs or sport

**Do strength and balance activities at least 2 days per week**

These may include:  
gym, yoga, carrying heavy bags, bowls, tai chi, dance

**Reduce your sitting time – Move regularly**

• **Every minute counts**

- Some activity is good, more is better
- Make a start today – **it's never too late**

## Just be ACTIVE

In the early stages of dementia it is essential for people to remain active in everyday ways. Keep doing the activities you enjoy and here are some things to try.

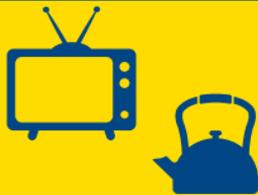
### Dance

- Dance in your living room to your favourite songs.
- Encourage family or friends to join in.
- Look out for tea dances and daytime discos in your local area.



### Get up

- Stand up and sit down 10 times during TV advert breaks.
- March on the spot while waiting for the kettle to boil.



### Football

- Have a kick about with family or friends.
- Set up a goal and score penalties.
- Try walking football – check your local football clubs for a group nearby.



## Just be ACTIVE

### Gardening

- Do what you can in your garden.
- Use support if you need it.
- Consider raised beds, or a local community garden or allotment.



### Shopping

- walk to the shops, or in a large indoor shopping area.
- A trolley can be used for support.
- Try to carry bags yourself, or consider using a rucksack.



### Stairs

- Step up and down on the bottom step 10 times.
- Use the stairs regularly.
- Get handrails fitted if needed.



## Tai Chi , Yoga and Pilates

- Discuss your needs with an instructor at any class.
- Go at your own pace – you do not need to do every move in a class or routine.
- Adapt the moves to suit you – you can even do them sitting down.



## Walking

- Stick to familiar routes and tell someone where you are going.
- Consider a walking aid to remain independent.
- Wear a fitness tracker to measure your distance.
- Consider wearing a GPS tracker if you think you might get lost.



**Why not try joining a local health or dementia walk?**

**Did you know:**  
activity can help to stimulate your appetite, and may improve your bowel function.



## Just EXERCISE

- **Physiotherapists promote the Big 6 exercises for strength, balance and flexibility.**
- **Depending on your ability there are 2 options: standing and seated.**
- **Aim to do these every day or at least twice a week.**



- **Make sure the chair you use is sturdy.**
- **Wear supportive shoes.**
- **If you experience chest pain, dizziness or shortness of breath, stop and call your GP or call 111.**
- **A slight soreness the day after exercise is quite normal.**

## Exercise: Standing

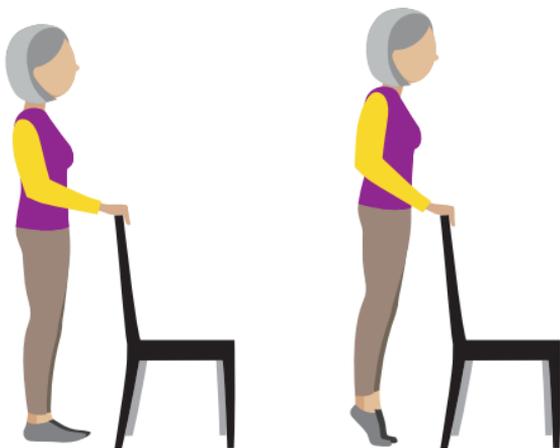
1



### Sit to Stand

Stand up. Sit down.  
Repeat 10 times.

2

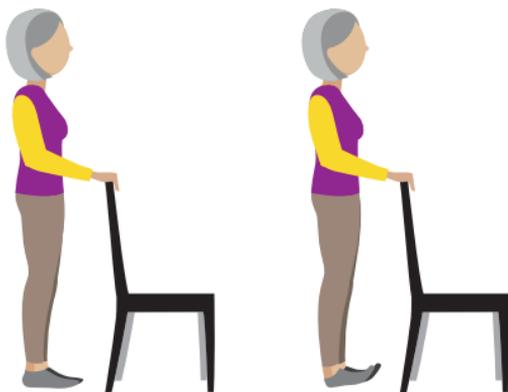


### Heel Raises

Lift your heels and lower them.  
Repeat 10 times.

## Exercise: Standing

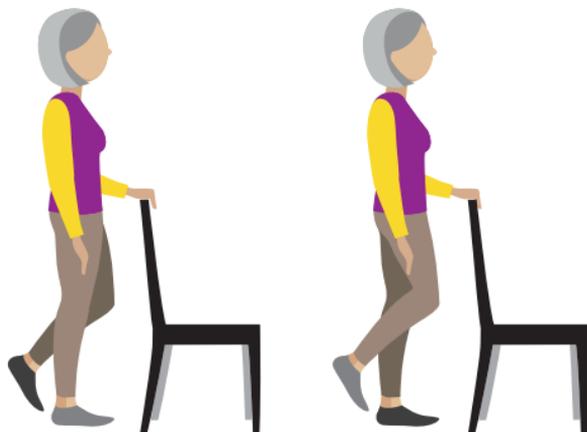
3



## Toe Raises

Lift your toes and lower them.  
Repeat 10 times.

4

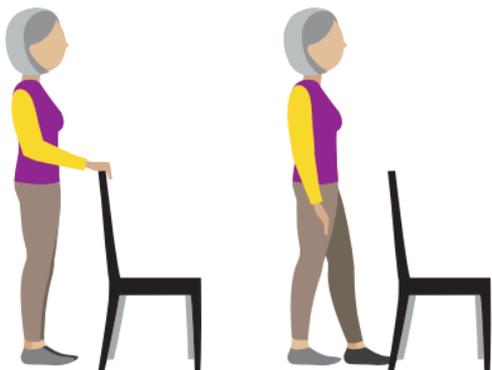


## One Leg Stand

Stand on one leg for 10 seconds.  
Stand on the opposite leg for 10 seconds.

## Exercise: Standing

5

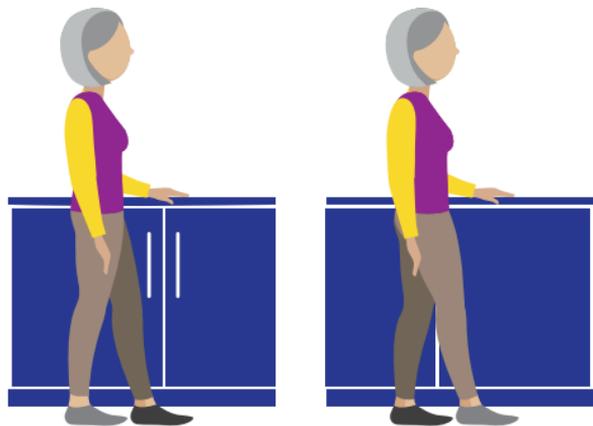


## Heel Toe Stand

Put one foot in front of the other like standing on a tightrope. Hold for 10 seconds.

Swap legs around. **Hold for 10 seconds.**

6



## Heel Toe Walking

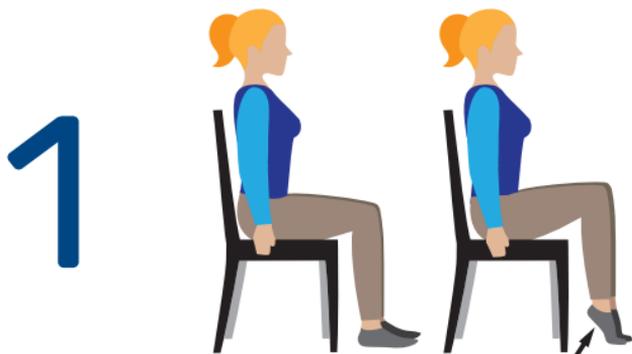
Walk one foot in front of the other like walking on a tightrope. **Do 5-10 steps.**

10



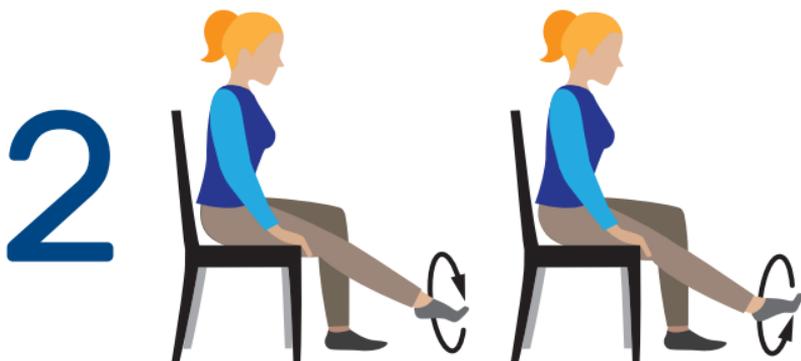
- **For every exercise sit up straight in a chair.**
- **If possible, sit away from the back of the chair and have your feet flat on the floor.**

## Exercise: Seated



### Heel Raises

Lift your heels off the floor and lower them.  
Repeat 10 times.



### Ankle Circles

Circle your ankles 10 times. Repeat in the  
opposite direction.  
Repeat with other leg.

## Exercise: Seated



### Straighten Knee

Straighten your knee and pull your toes up towards you. Hold for 5 seconds.

Slowly relax to starting position and repeat 5 times.

Repeat with other leg.



### Seated Marching

Lift your feet off the floor one at a time.

Count to 20.

## Exercise: Seated

5



### Arm Reaching

Place hands on your shoulders, reach up to the ceiling.  
Repeat 10 times.

6



### Seated Rowing

Start with your arms straight out in front. Pull your arms back in a rowing motion.  
Repeat 10 times.

You can download a copy of the standing or seated exercises, in larger print from the Alzheimers Scotland website: <https://www.alzscot.org/ahpresources>

## **Films of the exercise are available on You Tube**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YA5xvvoaVa8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhnkOhAWf-Q>

**Why not print the sheets out and put them on your wall to remind you to do your exercises.**



## Just MOVEMENT

As dementia progresses, specific exercises may no longer be possible. This may be because a person struggles to follow instructions visually and verbally.

People will vary in their abilities – some will still be able to walk, some may start to struggle with this.

- Always adapt activities to suit the person.
- At this stage all movement is encouraged.
- Any movement is better than none at all so we encourage you to just move!

**When you ask a person with dementia to do something, wait and give them time to do it, before you help them.**

**Letting people do things for themselves, or asking them to help with everyday tasks can keep them moving for longer.**

**Physical activities do not need to last a long time, Every minute helps.**



## Just MOVEMENT

**Balls and balloons** instantly get people moving.

- You can throw, pass or kick them.
- Small balloons move slowly. Try punchbag balloons or beach balls for faster movement.
- Get people to blow up the balloons.

**Light scarves** can also be used.

- You can wave them, dance with them, scrunch them into balls or tie them in knots.
- They can have a sensory impact.



### Games

- Try bowls, skittles, seated basketball, darts or velcro darts.



**Goals:** Set a goal based task. Try

- "can you answer the door please"
- "lets go and sit at the table"
- "come with me"



## Housework

- Standing to do the dishes, dusting, setting the table, making the beds, folding towels or watering the plants will all involve movement.



## Singing and Dancing:

- Play music, sing along & have a boogie!
- Clicking fingers and tapping toes are all encouraged in sitting and standing.
- Action songs which need little explanation include: New York New York, The Twist, The Hand Jive, Saturday night fever, Agadoo, YMCA, Mairi's Wedding (and other Scottish jigs).
- Use music with a strong beat. Try creating a playlist of favourite songs.
- Singing is great for breathing and talking. Use a microphone and "do a turn".



share your ideas and  
experiences with us!  
**#justmove**

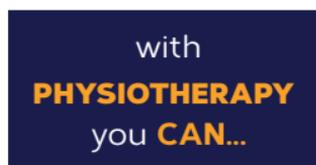
## Referring to Physiotherapy

Physiotherapists are experts in using physical activities and interventions to keep you healthy and living well.

Physiotherapy can help you if you are having difficulty walking and being active, or if you are having falls. They can suggest more personalised activities and exercises to boost your strength and balance and give you ideas or equipment to help you keep walking. They can help you recover from illnesses or injuries, so you can keep doing the things you enjoy.

If you are caring for someone with dementia and need support with helping them to move and walk, physiotherapists can show you the best ways to safely support them.

Your GP or consultant can refer you to an NHS physiotherapist. In some areas you may be able to self refer to Physiotherapy. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy can advise you on how to get in touch with a private physiotherapist.



Chartered Society of  
Physiotherapy Scotland,  
c/o Spaces, One Lochrin Square  
2 Fountainbridge, Edinburgh,  
EH3 9QA

Tel: **020 7306 6666** (CSP UK)

Email: **enquiries@csp.org.uk**

Website: **www.csp.org.uk**

Endorsed by



Supported by

