

# AT-HOME EXERCISE GUIDE

FOR OLDER ADULTS



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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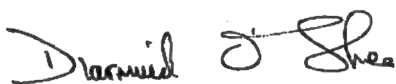
## FOREWORD

Taking positive steps to ensure you stay as active as you can when you are at home is very important for your personal wellbeing. How we turn any worry or concern we have into a positive action is a challenge. So whether you are at home “cocooning” or not, there are plenty of innovative suggestions on how you can pass the time and take a little more exercise. Taking control yourself is a very positive first step.

Don't wait around to hear them. Draw up your own plan. Set up your own new daily routine. Set a time to get up, a time for your meals, be sure to do some exercise in your own home or yard. Get Up, Get Dressed, Get Moving!

There is a lot of research that supports the fact that regular physical activity can help in the prevention and management of many chronic illnesses e.g. heart disease, diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, obesity, depression, osteoporosis and even premature death. On the other hand, reduced activity and bed rest contribute to poor health. Physical activity is what you as an individual can manage safely and comfortably; from sitting to stand from a chair 10 times, walking to the door, climbing the stairs, walking or running around the outside of the house. We would really like to encourage you to do something every single day. Set your own target and build up to it gradually.

While the current situation is worrying for many, keeping active can assist with not just your level of fitness but also in minding your mental health and wellbeing. In order to assist you to Get Up Get Dressed Get Moving, and to see the benefit of daily physical activity in our lives the following resources are available.



**Dr. Diarmuid O'Shea**  
President of the Irish  
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**Deirdre Lang**  
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& Midwifery Services Director



**Sean Moynihan**  
CEO of ALONE

## **PARTICIPATING AGENCIES & COLLABORATORS**

### **Get Up Get Dressed Get Moving**

In December 2018 the Health Service Executive (HSE) issued a “Call to Action” for healthcare services to promote independence and embed the idea of early and ongoing mobilisation into culture and practice across health and social care. To this end a national network was established to develop a model that is called “Get up, Get Dressed, Get Moving”. The network has 170 members which include ALONE, Active Retirement Association, Older Persons Parliament, Age & Opportunity, Siel Bleu, TILDA, hospitals, nursing homes, universities, researchers, Men’s Shed, GAA. It aims to promote activity for all ages, but in particular for older adults to support them in managing their health.



### **Siel Bleu Ireland**

Siel Bleu Ireland is a social enterprise and registered charity who offer life enhancing exercise programmes to older adults, people living with chronic conditions as well as physical and intellectual disabilities. Siel Bleu has over 23 years experience in delivering exercise classes to improve the physical, social and mental wellbeing of their participants, ensuring we stay active as we age. Siel Bleu Ireland have numerous physical activity resources available on their website and social media.  
[www.sielbleu.ie](http://www.sielbleu.ie) – 01 209 6889



# ALONE

ALONE is a national organisation that supports and empowers older people to age happily and securely at home. We support individuals and their families, work with other organisations, and campaign nationwide to improve the lives of older people. We work with all older people, including those who are lonely, isolated, homeless, living in poverty, or are experiencing other difficulties. We support them through these challenges to help them find long term solutions.

ALONE provide Support and Befriending, Coordinated Support, Housing, and technology and community services. We use individualised support plans and provide one point of contact for older people to access health, social care, housing and other services to improve physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. ALONE enables outcomes including improved quality of life, community activation, and implementation of national strategies.



YOU'RE NOT ALONE

## Age & Opportunity

The Age & Opportunity Active Programme is the National Sport & Physical Activity Programme for Older People in Ireland. A wide range of programmes are run by Age & Opportunity including Arts, Active and Engage all with the goal of empowering older adults. Physical activity programmes are a huge part of Age & Opportunity's work including PALs workshops, games and the National Go For Life Games event, a national day of recreational sport which takes place in June every year.

There is also a Physical Activity DVD and information sheets that can be posted out for free. Call Ciara on 01-8057733 or email [gfl@ageandopportunity.ie](mailto:gfl@ageandopportunity.ie) to get one posted out to you. Or visit [www.ageandopportunity.ie](http://www.ageandopportunity.ie) to download.



# Introduction to Exercise

## Exercise Recommendations

The World Health Organisation recommends at least **30 minutes a day** of moderate intensity activity, **five days a week**, or 150 minutes a week. It is important that every older person is active. If you are unable to perform 30 minutes of activity in one session, you can count **shorter bouts of activity which should last for at least 10 minutes**. If you cannot do the recommended amounts of physical activity due to health conditions, you should be **as physically active as your abilities and conditions allow**.

When you first begin, it is important that you **start slowly** to allow your body time to adjust to a new routine and also to understand how much your body is able for. As you get fitter and stronger you will be able to do more, however **rest is just as important** to allow the body time to recover from exercise. Remember, something is better than nothing and it may vary from week to week, depending on how you are feeling.



Regular physical activity has many associated benefits including a healthier heart, lower blood pressure and a reduced risk of falling. Keeping active can also have a major role to play in positive mental health - improved self-confidence, reduced stress and anxiety are all associated with regular physical activity.





## Safety Considerations

**Do not over exert yourself.** Activity should be stopped at the first sign of any of the following symptoms: light headedness, fatigue, chest pressure or pain, irregular heartbeat, or excessive shortness of breath.

Perform each exercise at an intensity comfortable for you and take sufficient water breaks as needed.

Make sure if you're using a chair that the chair is sturdy and safe and we recommend placing it against a wall for stability.

When exercising it's important to breathe regularly, focusing on breathing out on the effort. Physical activity will increase the rate and depth of your breathing which will become more efficient over time. It's important that you can still hold a conversation while exercising and that you aren't struggling for breath.

# Your Workout Outline

## Are you ready to get started?

Over the next few pages you're going to see different exercise categories. The exercises are suitable for everyone, however you may have to adapt the exercise to suit your individual needs. For example, standing exercises can be adapted to a seated position; an alternative for dumbbells could be small water bottles or tins of baked beans or even no weights at all.

To make the exercises harder increase the length of time or amount of repetitions performed for each exercise.

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We suggest that you **pick a selection of 6 exercises** to perform from the main exercises and if you feel up to it to attempt the other 6 at a later stage.

1 - **Warm Up** (2 exercises)

2 - **Main Exercises** - Seated & Standing  
(12 exercises - choose 6)

3 - **Cool Down / Stretches** (2 movements)

**LET'S GET STARTED!**



# Warm up

## Importance of a Warm Up

- Increases circulation and raises the body's temperature
- Gradually raises your heart rate preparing the heart and lungs for exercise
- Helps to loosen out your joints
- Reduces the risk of injury

## Creating an Exercise Routine

- Pick a time in the day that works for you
- Allow for recovery between sessions
- Always include a warm-up and cool down
- Choose up to 6 movements to work on
- Choose movements that you enjoy and that feel beneficial

## How to Warm up

- Do each movement slowly. This is a gentle warm-up
- Do each movement 5-10 times

**NOTE:** You should not feel any pain when doing this. If you do feel pain, go slower and use a smaller range of motion. Skip an exercise if you have to.



# Warm up

## Seated March



- Sitting up tall in a chair with both feet on the floor
  - Move arms and legs in a marching movement
  - Breathe regularly throughout
  - Do this for 60 seconds
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## Seated Shoulder Rolls



- Sitting up tall in a chair with arms by the side
  - Roll the arms and shoulders in a circular motion forward 10 times
  - Roll the arms and shoulders in a circular motion backwards 10 times
  - Breathe regularly throughout
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# Main Exercises

## Leg Extension



- Extend one leg out and hold for 5 seconds
  - Return foot to floor slowly and controlled
  - Repeat on the opposite leg
  - Repeat 10 times on each leg
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## Knee Lift



- Lift one knee up as high as comfortable
  - Slowly return your foot to floor
  - Focus on one leg at a time
  - Repeat 10 times on each leg
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## Hip Open/Close



- Lift one leg out to side, imagine stepping up and over a small wall
  - Foot lands flat to floor
  - Lift leg back, up and over wall
  - Repeat on opposite leg and continue to alternate
  - Do this 10 times with each leg
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## Sit to Stand



- Lean forward and slowly push up from chair into standing position
  - You can use a chair with armrests if needed
  - Keep your back straight throughout
  - Bring hips forward
  - Pause in standing position for 2-3 seconds
  - Slowly lower yourself back to seated position
  - Do this 10 times
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## Arm Circles



- Arms extended straight out to side; hands clenched
  - Gently drawing small circles 10 times forward and 10 times backwards
  - Keep arms in line with shoulders throughout
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## Bicep Curl



- Holding weights; elbows fixed by side
  - Curl arms until weights are in front of shoulders
  - Pause/hold at top and squeeze
  - Slowly lower weights down
  - Repeat 10 times
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## Front Raise



- Palms of hands faced down, grasping weights with arms straightened
- Slowly, raise weights
- Reach a height in line with your shoulders
- Hold position for 1 second and then lower weights
- Repeat 10 times

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## Heel Raises



- Hold onto chair/countertop for support
- Feet hip width apart with toes pointed straight ahead
- Lift heels high up off floor
- Pause for 2 seconds and return heels to floor
- Repeat 10 times

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## Toe Raises



- Hold onto chair/countertop for support
- Feet hip width apart with toes pointed straight ahead
- Lift toes up off floor
- Pause for 2 seconds and return toes to floor
- Repeat 10 times



## Hip Abduction



- Hold onto chair/countertop, feet hip width apart and toes pointed ahead throughout
- Lift leg to side (as far as comfortable) without upper body moving
- Pause and slowly return leg back
- Repeat 10 times

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## Hip Extension



- Hold onto chair/countertop for support
- Keep body straight
- Slowly bring leg backwards
- Don't allow upper body to lean forward
- Return the foot to the floor
- Repeat 10 times on each leg

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## One Leg Stand



- Hands on chair/countertop for support
- Lift one foot a few inches off floor
- Avoid leaning forward or to side
- Hold position for up to 30 seconds
- Repeat on the other leg



# Cool Down and Stretches

## Upper Back Stretch



- Sitting up tall in a chair with both feet on the floor
- Bring both hands back to your shoulders with palms facing forward
- Squeeze shoulder blades together and hold for 10 seconds

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## Ankle Points



- Sitting up tall in a chair with one leg raised at a comfortable height
- Point toes forward away from you and hold
- Point toes back towards you and hold for 10 seconds
- Repeat on opposite leg

# STICK TO AN **ACTIVE** ROUTINE

While you may not be able to stick to your normal routine  
- you can create a new routine at home which includes  
alternative ways to keep active.

- Get up at the same time everyday •
- Do a small workout / exercise •
  - Have a nice breakfast •
  - Take a shower •
  - Call a friend •
- Go to bed at a regular time •
- Only watch the news one time in the day •
- If you have a garden, walk around  
when the weather allows •

