



# The Easy At-Home Fitness Guide for Older Adults

Create a just-for-you  
workout routine P.4

---

Build stronger muscles  
today (no weights  
required) P.2

---

Level up your walking  
program P.5

---

**PLUS**  
The secrets to  
modifying any  
exercise P.6



# Build Strength Without Weights? Yes!

This 4-move bodyweight circuit will help you hold onto precious muscle as you get older.

Strength training has something for everyone. It helps improve mobility and ease joint pain, reports the National Strength and Conditioning Association. It also helps lower inflammation,

which plays a role in many chronic health conditions. Aim to complete this sequence three times a week. Check with your provider before starting any new exercise program.



## 1

### Squat

**Why it's effective:** The squat activates your quads, glutes, hamstrings, calves, core and hips all at once. That makes it a key player in helping you safely perform everyday movements that require lower-body strength, like standing, sitting and picking objects up off the floor.

■ **How to do it:**

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, toes turned out slightly. Tighten your core.
- Shift your weight onto your heels and slowly push your hips back and down to create a bend at your hips (not your waist).
- Lower yourself until your thighs are parallel (or almost parallel) to the floor.
- In a single motion, drive through your heels to push yourself back up to standing. Complete 10 to 15 repetitions.

## 2

### Incline Pushup

**Why it's effective:** This modified pushup is a low-impact total-body strengthener.

■ **How to do it:**

- Place your palms shoulder-width apart on a wall at chest height (or use a countertop). Step backward until your body forms an angle.
- Brace your core and lower your chest toward the surface. Then push yourself outward until your arms are fully extended.
- Complete 10 to 15 repetitions.





# 3

## Wall Sit

**Why it's effective:** The wall sit hits every major muscle in your legs and your core. Tip: Wear athletic shoes to keep your feet from sliding during this move.

■ **How to do it:**

- Stand tall with your back against a wall and press your upper back into it.
- Walk your feet out a few inches and slowly bend your knees to lower yourself into a sitting position. (You can rest your hands on your thighs.) Hold this position for 10 seconds, or as long as you comfortably can.
- Return to standing, and repeat once.

# 4

## Forearm Plank

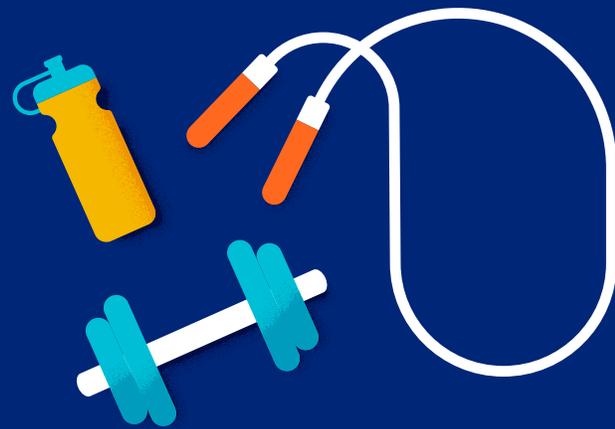
**Why it's effective:** Core exercises are key for helping you move stronger through everyday life and avoid injuries. The forearm plank is nice because it keeps you from straining your neck and back.

■ **How to do it:**

- Position yourself facedown on a mat, elbows close to your sides and directly under your shoulders.
- Tuck your toes into the floor, tighten your core, and lift your torso until your body forms a straight line from head to ankles.
- Hold for 20 seconds, or as long as you comfortably can without letting your lower back sag or hiking up your glutes.
- Return to the start, rest for a few moments, and then repeat two or three times.



# Create Your Best Home Workout



No gym? No problem. Here's how to seize the mind and body benefits of exercise right in your living room.

Think you can only get a great workout at a gym or fitness center? Think again. As long as you hit all four major types of exercise – cardio, strength, balance and flexibility – on a regular basis, your home workout regimen will give you everything you need, reports the National

Institute on Aging (NIA). For the full benefit, build up to at least 30 minutes of exercise most days. Be sure to check with your provider before starting any new exercise program, especially if you have a chronic condition or are recovering from an injury or surgery.

## Step #1: Build Endurance

### ■ How often: 5 or 6 days each week

Cardio, or aerobic, exercises are designed to optimize your heart rate and your breathing. The result? Better endurance.

**Do it:** Make it fun. Set a timer for 20 minutes and dance your way through some of your favorite quick-tempo songs. Or walk a few “laps” around your house, varying the length of your stride or even inserting a few lunges as you go.

## Step #2: Gain Strength

### ■ How often: 2 or 3 days each week

Strength training should be on your radar, notes the NIA. Simply put, stronger muscles may equal greater independence in your later years.

**Do it:** Work all of your major muscle groups – legs, upper body and core. Use your body weight or find substitutes for dumbbells (e.g., water bottles, soup cans or bags of rice). Try the moves on page 3.

## Step #3: Find Balance

### ■ How often: Daily

Balance training is particularly important to help prevent falls.

**Do it:** Some of the best balance exercises can be done anywhere, anytime. During a commercial break, for example, stand up and try to balance on one foot for the duration of the ad. When the next ad comes on, switch legs. Stand close to a wall for support, if needed.

## Step #4: Stretch Yourself

### ■ How often: Daily

Working on your flexibility and range of motion helps make routine activities, like bending down to tie your shoes, easier. It also lowers your risk of injury.

**Do it:** While you're sitting, extend your legs and point and flex your feet, do arm circles, or reach your hands above your head. For a more dedicated stretching session, do a series of yoga poses.

# Take Your Daily Walk to the Next Level

Walking is one of the best forms of cardio out there. If this is old news to you, it's time to turn your daily walks into awesome workouts with heart-pumping intervals. Give these two 30-minute routines a go.



## Walking Workout #1: Interval Training

Varying your tempo can help burn more calories and make your workout more effective.

### ■ Interval 1: 5 minutes

Walk at an easy, comfortable pace.

### ■ Interval 2: 30 seconds

Speed up, using your arms to propel your body forward. You should feel your heart rate increase slightly.

### ■ Interval 3: 60 seconds

Slow down to a leisurely pace.

Continue repeating the intervals for 30 minutes or until the end of your walk.

## Walking Workout #2: Around the World

Walking sideways and backward can help strengthen the muscles in your inner and outer thighs while improving your balance and coordination.

### ■ Warmup: 5 minutes

Walk at an easy, comfortable pace.

### ■ Exercise 1: 10 minutes

Set a timer for 1 minute or keep an eye on your watch. At the top of each minute, sidestep or shuffle for 10 to 15 steps, and then continue walking at your warmup pace for the rest of the minute.

Walk near a wall if needed for safety. Do 10 rounds, and remember to switch directions each time you sidestep or shuffle.

### ■ Exercise 2: 10 minutes

Find a flat, uncrowded area. Set a timer for 1 minute or keep an eye on your watch. At the top of each minute, walk backward for 10 to 15 steps, then continue walking at your warmup pace for the rest of the minute.

Walk near a wall if needed for safety. If you're uncomfortable walking backward, do a sidestep movement instead. Complete 10 rounds.

### ■ Cooldown: 5 minutes

Cool down at your warmup pace.



## NEW TO EXERCISE? HERE'S HOW TO PACE YOURSELF

If you're just getting started with a regular walking routine, the most important thing is to make it a habit and be consistent. Start with five to 10 minutes a day. Each week, add five minutes until you get to 30 minutes. Once you're up to a 30-minute walking session, try one of the routines above.

# 5 Tricks for Modifying Gym Exercises

When an exercise feels uncomfortable, too difficult or even painful, don't toss it out. Tweak it so you can reap the benefits safely.

## Change the Angle of Your Body

You can make an exercise easier (or harder, which is known as a progression) by changing the angle of your body. Exercises done in a pushup or plank position are the best example of this. The more upright your body is, the easier the exercise will be. And easier does not mean less effective. Doing a pushup with your hands on a step, chair or wall can actually build deep core and shoulder strength.

## Take Out Any Jumps, Leaps and Bounces

Jumping exercises build strength and power, but they're not always good for people with arthritis, urinary incontinence or a history of injuries. The solution: Keep your feet planted on the floor. Instead of high knees, simply march in place. For burpees, step your feet out and back into a plank, and nix the jump at the top of the movement.

## Decrease Your Range of Motion

The shorter the distance your arms and legs have to travel, the easier the exercise. So if you're not able to pick up a weight from the floor, place it on a piece of furniture. If doing exercises with a step is difficult, use one that's lower. Or don't move your body as far: When you're doing a squat, for example, go down just a couple of inches instead of bending your knees to a 90-degree angle.



## Go Lighter

One of the easiest ways to scale down any movement: go lighter on your dumbbells, resistance bands or medicine balls. You can modify further by using no added weight at all — use just your body weight as the resistance.

## Add Stability

If doing an exercise on one leg is too challenging, make it easier to maintain your balance by using both. You can also increase your stability during an exercise with a chair or wall. By holding onto a chair as you perform lunges, for example, you'll take some of the work off your core and be able to focus on working your lower body — and worry less about losing your balance.



### ALREADY A UNITEDHEALTHCARE® MEDICARE ADVANTAGE MEMBER?

Sign in or register on your plan website to see a personalized view of your Medicare benefits and get access to tools and resources to help you manage your plan and your health.