

# Healthy Living For Older Adults

*Large Print*



Allina Health



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*Large Print*

*First edition*

**Developed by Allina Health.**

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For specific information about your health condition, please contact your health care provider.







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## Healthy Lifestyle Choices

The choices you make each day will determine how well you age. These choices include:

- what you eat
- how much you eat
- what you do for exercise
- how you “exercise” your brain
- how you stay socially active.

Making healthy lifestyle choices can move you toward your goals and help you feel your best today, tomorrow and in the years to come.

## Nutrition: What You Need to Know

Good nutrition is essential for a healthy body and mind. Eating well-balanced meals and snacks can help you feel your best and help you to:

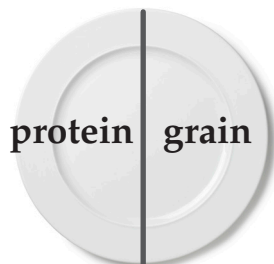
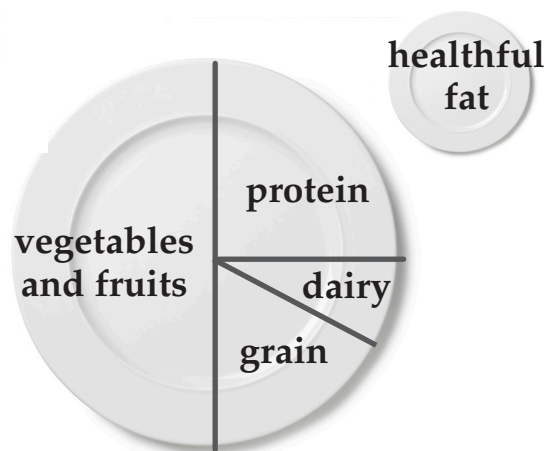
- have more energy
- feel strong
- not get sick (boost immunity)
- recover faster with less downtime
- think clearly.

It is important to eat regularly throughout the day, whether you choose to have three balanced meals, small amounts of food more often or a combination of meals and snacks.

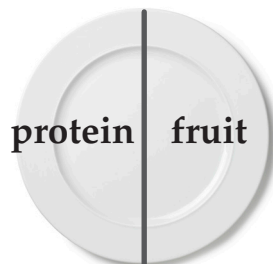
Try to think about what your plate should look like when you are planning your meals and snacks.



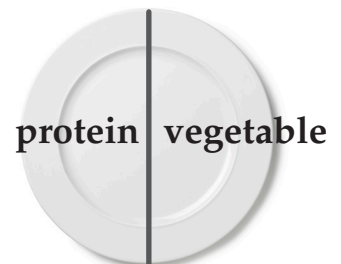
### For meals:



### For snacks:



OR



OR

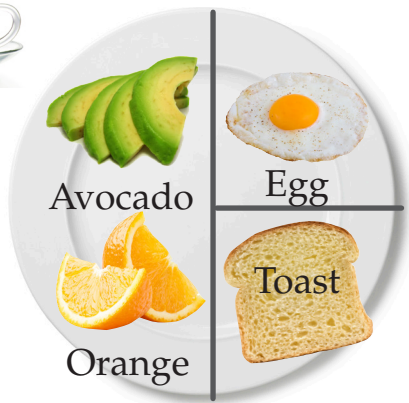
Here are some examples of healthful meals and snacks.

## For meals:

### At breakfast:



Tea



Avocado

Egg

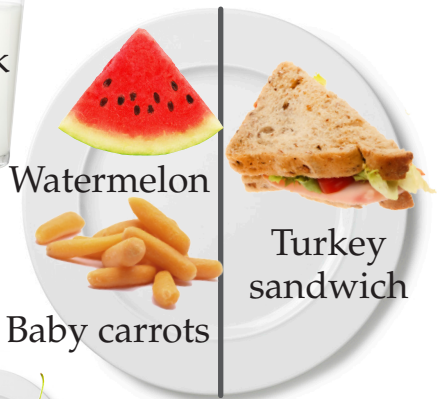
Toast

Orange

### At lunch:



Milk



Watermelon

Baby carrots

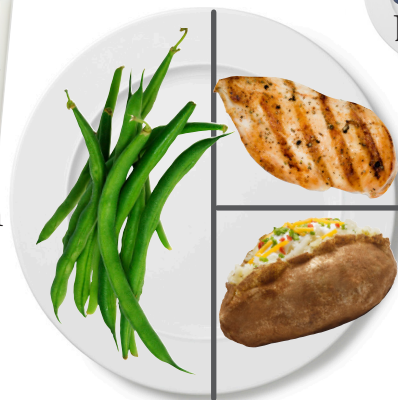
Turkey sandwich

### At dinner:



Milk

Green beans



Chicken breast

Baked potato



Berries

## For snacks:

### Apple with cheese



### Bran flakes with milk



### Yogurt with fruit



### Nuts with dried fruit



### Vegetables with hummus



## Important

### Drink plenty of water!

Dehydration is common among older adults.

As you age, you may not feel thirst as you once did. Staying well-hydrated decreases your risk for urinary tract infections (UTIs), constipation and confusion.

## Important nutrients for older adults

As you age, it is important to eat foods rich in the following nutrients.

### ■ Protein:

Most older adults do not eat enough protein to make up for the loss of muscle. Protein helps repair and build healthy tissue (build and maintain muscle), strengthens your immune system and helps you recover better from illness or injury. **You should have at least one serving of protein at each meal.** Protein is not only meat. (See the chart on the next page for examples of foods that contain protein.)

### ■ Vitamin B12:

As you age, your body produces less stomach acid, making it more difficult to absorb this vitamin from food. You may need to take a supplement.

### ■ More potassium, less sodium:

Eating foods rich in potassium and low in sodium can help to lower your risk of high blood pressure. Many vegetables and fruits are good choices. Talk with your health care provider about how much potassium and sodium you should have each day if you have kidney disease, or if you are taking diuretics (“water pills”) or heart medicine.

### ■ Calcium and vitamin D:




















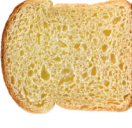





Bones thin as you age. Getting enough calcium and vitamin D from foods or supplements will help your bones stay strong and lower your risk for a bone fracture.

### ■ Fiber:

Fiber helps you have regular bowel movements, which can slow with aging. **Make sure you are drinking plenty of water too!** Doing so helps the fiber move through your intestines.

Use the chart on the next page to help you choose foods for building well-balanced meals and snacks.

The following chart shows examples of foods to put on your plate.

Protein	Vitamin B12	Potassium	Calcium/Vitamin D	Fiber
 Chicken	 Turkey	 Squash	 Milk	 Brown rice
 Cheese	 Tuna	 Avocado	 Yogurt	 Peas
 Egg	 Red meat	 Banana	 Almonds	 Beans and legumes
 Nuts	 Fortified cereal	 Brussels sprouts	 Sardines	 Whole-grain bread
 Salmon	 Shellfish	 Spinach	 Broccoli	 Berries

## Changes in your appetite

Have you had a change in your appetite? You may have noticed you often do not “feel hungry” — but it is important that you eat healthful foods throughout the day.

Not giving your body the nourishment it needs may lead to:

- illness
- infections
- poor wound healing
- muscle loss
- less energy
- weight loss
- not being able to do everyday tasks you once could
- falls.

Getting enough of the nutrients your body needs can be challenging if you do not feel hungry. Here are some tips to help you get the most from your meal and snack times:

- You may feel better if you eat smaller amounts of food rather than large meals. Try eating smaller meals more often throughout the day.
- Make sure your dentures fit well (if you wear them). Talk with your dentist about proper fit and any problems you are having with your dentures or mouth.
- Arrange to eat some of your meals with family, friends or a neighbor. Enjoying a meal together can help you eat more. It will also brighten your day and theirs too!
- Consider asking a member of your care circle for help with your grocery shopping. He or she can help you shop for healthful foods and give you ideas for cooking smaller portions.

### Important

Your care circle is your family, friends and others close to you.



## Tip

Consider freezing half or splitting a food item with a family member, friend or neighbor. For example, bread can be frozen or packages of fresh vegetables can be split and shared.

- Sign up to have meals delivered if you are not able to prepare food for yourself.
- Arrange for your groceries to be delivered to your home. Many grocery stores offer delivery service for a fee.
- Talk with your health care provider about ready-to-drink nutrition beverages such as Ensure®, Boost®, Carnation® Breakfast Essentials™ or another product you like as snacks to add calories and good nutrition to your day. **Do not drink these too close to mealtime (within 2 hours before) or with your meals.** Doing so may fill you up and cause you to eat less.
- Your taste may be changing as you get older. If you have favorite recipes, try decreasing the amount of salt and adding herbs and spices instead.
- Request to have a medicine review at your next appointment with your health care provider. He or she can make sure your medicines are not causing you to have a poor appetite. You can also ask your pharmacist questions about your medicines.

# Physical Activity and Exercise

## Tip

If you have not been physically active, talk with your health care provider before you start an exercise program.

You may have noticed you have been less active because of your health problem (condition). When muscles are not used, they become weak.

As you age, you lose strength (muscles mass) and bone density. This makes it more difficult for you to do your daily activities and maintain your independence. If you do not exercise regularly, you are at a higher risk for:

- extreme loss of muscle mass (sarcopenia) or bone density (osteoporosis)
- lower energy levels
- weight loss (not intentional)
- a decrease in your walking speed
- falls.

You can also have a combination of the above, which may lead to extreme weakness (frailty).

## Differences between activities and exercise

Activities are things you do each day such as walking to your car, making a meal, or doing a hobby or housework. These keep your body moving throughout the day.

Exercises are physically exerting movements done to make your muscles, heart and lungs stronger. They must go above and beyond what you do in your daily routine. For example, going to the grocery store is not exercise but going to the mall just to walk would be considered exercise.

Your daily activities are important but regular exercise is needed to build and maintain your muscles and bones.

## Did You Know?

Exercise also has mental health benefits. Exercise can improve your:

- mood
- sleep
- attitude
- energy level
- and more!

## Tip

To tell how hard you are exercising you can use the “talk test.”

This is your ability to have a fairly normal conversation while exercising. If you can sing, you need to work a little harder. If you have trouble talking, you need to slow down.

## Tip

Drink water before, during and after exercise.

## Types of exercise

There are four types of exercise that are important to prevent or slow the effects of aging. This includes:

■ **aerobic (cardiorespiratory):** Aerobic exercise continues for a period of time (at least 10 minutes) without rest. In order to be considered “aerobic,” an exercise must cause you to experience one or more of the following:

- make you mildly short of breath
- increase your heart rate
- cause you to sweat.

**The National Institute on Aging (NIA) recommends that all adults (including older adults) have at least 150 minutes of aerobic exercise each week.** It is best for you to do aerobic exercise 5 to 7 times each week.

■ **strength training:** Strength training applies resistance to your muscles which can increase strength, reduce body fat and improve bone health. It is important that you increase the amount of resistance over time. Examples include using:

- elastic bands
- cuff and hand weights
- weight machines.

You can even use your own body weight to increase strength!

**The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends that all adults (including older adults) do strength-training exercises at least 2 times each week with at least 1 day of rest in between. As you strength train:**

- make sure to include exercises that target your largest muscles in your upper and lower body
- use enough weight for your muscles to be tired between 8 and 15 repetitions
- increase the amount of weight you are lifting when you can do 15 repetitions or more.

### Important

Stretching should not be painful. If you feel pain, stop right away.

- **balance exercises:** Balance exercises can help to improve your steadiness, reaction time and mobility, and help to prevent you from falling. Examples include dancing, yoga, tai chi and even standing on one leg.

**The ACSM recommends to do 20 to 30 minutes of balance exercises 2 to 7 times each week.**

- **stretching:** Stretching can help to improve flexibility and reduce joint and muscle stiffness. Being more flexible will help you move more freely to do your daily activities (reaching into a shelf, getting dressed).

**According to the ACSM, stretching should be done 3 to 7 times each week. Hold each stretch for 10 to 30 seconds and repeat 2 to 4 times.** Make sure to relax and breathe. Do not hold your breath or bounce as this could cause an injury.

# Brain Health

## “Exercise” your brain

It is important to “exercise” your brain. As you age, you need to keep learning new things. Ways you may be able to do this include:

- ☐ taking a computer class
- ☐ learning a new hobby or craft
- ☐ playing a game that involves counting or strategy
- ☐ taking a community education class
- ☐ getting involved at the local senior center
- ☐ learning a new game or puzzle (card game, Sudoku)
- ☐ talking with others (being social)
- ☐ reading a book or watching a movie and talking about it with someone
- ☐ volunteering.

You can also get back to a hobby you used to do but let go.

## Tip

It is common to need help with transportation. It is OK to ask a member of your care circle to give you a ride. Your community may also have other resources to help you.

## Staying socially active

It is also important to stay socially active. As you age, you may notice you are not getting out of the house as much. It may take effort to arrange activities with friends or family. Here are some ideas to stay socially active:

- ☐ volunteering
- ☐ attending church or another spiritual service
- ☐ going to a community center, gym or health club
- ☐ going to the local senior center to eat a meal, play a game or do other activities
- ☐ having lunch or coffee with someone
- ☐ going for walks with a friend
- ☐ inviting friends over to watch a movie or work on a puzzle.

Your community may also offer opportunities for a companion to spend time with you.

## How to Get Started With Exercise

- **Start slow and simple!**

When you begin an exercise program, it is important to start small and increase as you get stronger. For example, start with 5 minutes of walking and work up to 30 minutes.

- **Check in with yourself.**

You may feel a little bit sore the day after exercise. That's OK! However, if you cannot do your normal activities (getting dressed, walking, cooking), you've done too much. Give yourself an extra day of rest and do a little less next time.

- **Increase little by little.**

You can increase the amount of time you exercise, the intensity of exercise or both. For example, you can walk for longer, walk faster or both.

- **Add variety to your exercise.**

If you're most comfortable with walking, start with that and add other types of exercise as you get stronger.

Here are some examples of activities you can do for each type of exercise:

Aerobic Exercise	Strength Training	Balance Exercise	Stretching
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ walking</li><li>■ biking</li><li>■ swimming</li><li>■ dancing</li><li>■ aerobics</li><li>■ cardio equipment (treadmill, elliptical, bike)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ upper body exercises</li><li>■ lower body exercises</li><li>■ core (abdominal) exercises</li><li>■ variety of upper, lower and core exercises</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ standing exercises</li><li>■ tai chi</li><li>■ qigong</li><li>■ head movements and eye exercises</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ flexibility exercises</li><li>■ Pilates</li><li>■ yoga</li><li>■ chair yoga</li></ul>
<b>Goal:</b> daily <b>Example:</b> 20 to 30 minutes, 5 days a week	<b>Goal:</b> 3 times a week	<b>Goal:</b> daily	<b>Goal:</b> daily or at least 3 times a week

The following pages each have a colored bar at the top.  
This matches the types of exercises in the chart above.

### Important

Talk with your health care provider if you:

- are afraid of falling
- have fallen in the past year
- have pain that makes it hard to exercise.

Your health care provider may refer you to a physical therapist who can design an exercise program that can help:

- make you stronger
- prevent falls
- reduce pain.



# Let's Get Started!

## Strength, balance and stretching exercises

You may want to begin by only using your body weight to perform some of the exercises. As you get stronger, add weight (resistance) to challenge your muscles. If you are easily able to do an exercise 15 times (repetitions), increase the amount of weight during your next session.

If you do not have hand weights at home, you can use one of the following:

- soup cans in plastic or reusable grocery bags (several cans in each bag)
- soup cans (one in each hand)
- cuff weights
- elastic bands
- cane with a cuff weight attached.



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**Left to right: Grocery bags, soup cans, a cuff weight, hand weights, an elastic band or a cane with a cuff weight attached can be used to do your exercises.**



# Strengthening Exercises

## Upper body exercises

### ☐ Arm (bicep) curl

This exercise will help strengthen your arm muscles.



**A**



**B**

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- Stand (or sit) with your hands at your sides. Hold the weights like you would hold a shopping bag. (A)
- Slowly bend your arms up and down. (B)
- Do this exercise 8 to 15 times (repetitions).
- Do this exercise 2 to 4 times each week with at least 1 day of rest in between.

## ❑ Band rows

This exercise will help strengthen your midback muscles.



**A**



© Allina Health System

**B**

### Tip

To anchor the elastic band:

- tie a knot in the middle of the band
- place the knot in a doorframe at chest height and shut the door. (Make sure the door latches tightly.)

- Anchor an elastic band in front of you.
- Hold the ends of the band in your hands. (A)
- Tighten your stomach muscles.
- Gently pull your elbows back, while squeezing your shoulder blades together. (B)
- Return to your starting position.
- Do this exercise 8 to 15 times (repetitions).
- Do this exercise 2 to 4 times each week with at least 1 day of rest in between.

## ❑ Arm (tricep) extension with a band

This exercise will help strengthen your arm muscles.



**A**



**B**

© Allina Health System

### Did You Know?

You can also sit as you do this exercise.

- Hold one end of the elastic band in your left hand near your heart.
- Grasp the band toward the middle with your right hand. Your arm should be at a 90-degree angle. (A)
- Tighten your stomach muscles.
- Keep your right upper arm against your body and straighten your elbow back behind you. (B)
- Return to your starting position.
- Do this exercise 8 to 15 times (repetitions).
- Repeat with the other arm.
- Do this exercise 2 to 4 times each week with at least 1 day of rest in between.



## ❑ Wall pushup

This exercise will help strengthen your upper back and arms.



**A**



**B**

© Allina Health System

### Did You Know?

The closer you stand to the wall, the easier the exercise will be. As you get stronger, stand farther from the wall to challenge your muscles.

- Stand facing a wall. Keep your feet shoulder-width apart. Place your hands on the wall, also shoulder-width apart. (A)
- Tighten your stomach muscles.
- Lean into the wall, keeping your back straight. (B)
- Return to your starting position.
- Do this exercise 8 to 15 times (repetitions).
- Do this exercise 2 to 4 times each week with at least 1 day of rest in between.



**A**

## Lower body

### ☐ Seated knee extension

This exercise will help increase your leg strength.

- Place two soup cans in a reusable grocery bag. (A)
- Sit in a sturdy chair. Sit with good posture with your feet flat on the floor.
- Balance the grocery bag on the top of your ankle. (B)
- Slowly straighten your leg straight out. Stop as soon as you feel tension. (C)
- Hold for 3 to 5 seconds.
- Slowly lower your leg to the starting position without letting your leg drop to the floor.
- Do this exercise 8 to 15 times (repetitions).
- Repeat with the other leg.
- Do this exercise 2 to 4 times each week with at least 1 day of rest in between.



**B**



**C**

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## ❑ Chair sit to stand

This exercise will help strengthen your legs.



**A**



**B**

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### Tip

You can also hold a weight in each hand to make this exercise more challenging. If you add weight, do this exercise 2 to 4 times each week with at least 1 day of rest in between.

- Sit in a sturdy chair. Sit with good posture with your feet flat on the floor.
- Scoot forward to the front of the seat. You can cross your arms or leave your arms at your sides, depending on what is most comfortable.
- Lean forward with your “nose over your toes.” (A)
- Push up, straightening your knees and hips, into a standing position. Squeeze your buttocks. (B)
- Sit down slowly with good control.
- Do this exercise 8 to 15 times (repetitions).
- Do this exercise every day.



## ❑ Standing hip extension

This exercise will help strengthen the muscles in your buttocks and hips.



**A**



**B**

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### Tip

If your band is not already in a loop, tie the ends together with a secure knot before starting this exercise.

- Stand behind a sturdy chair (or counter), holding the back of the chair for support. Stand with good posture.
- Place an elastic band around your ankles. Keep your feet shoulder-width apart. (A)
- Lift (extend) one leg backward, keeping your knee straight. (B) Do not hunch or lean forward.
- Do this exercise 8 to 15 times (repetitions).
- Repeat with the other leg.
- Do this exercise 2 to 4 times each week with at least 1 day of rest in between.

## ❑ Standing hip abduction

This exercise will help strengthen the muscles on the side of your hip and buttocks.



**A**



© Allina Health System

**B**

### Tip

If doing the standing hip extension and abduction with a band is too hard, you can start by doing it without the band. As you get stronger, try using the band again..

- Stand behind a sturdy chair (or counter), holding the back of the chair for support. Stand with good posture.
- Place an elastic band around your ankles. Keep your feet shoulder-width apart. (A)
- Keep your knees and body straight, and toes pointing forward.
- Lift your leg out to the side. (B) Do not lean.
- Do this exercise 8 to 15 times (repetitions).
- Repeat with the other leg.
- Do this exercise 2 to 4 times each week with at least 1 day of rest in between.



## ❑ Heel raise

This exercise will help strengthen your calf muscles.



**A**



**B**

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### Tip

You can also hold a weight in each hand to make this exercise more challenging. If you add weight, do this exercise 2 to 4 times each week with at least 1 day of rest in between.

- Stand behind a sturdy chair, (or counter) holding the back of the chair for support. Stand with good posture. (A)
- While keeping your knees straight, rise up on the balls of your feet so your heels are off the floor. (B)
- Slowly lower your feet.
- Do this exercise 8 to 15 times (repetitions).
- Do this exercise every day.

## Balance Exercises

These balance exercises will help with your balance and walking.

### ☐ Heel-toe (tandem) walking



**A**



**B**

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### Did You Know?

You can make this exercise more challenging by:

- moving your head
  - right to left
  - or
  - up and down
- walking faster
- using your hands less for support.

- Stand near a wall (or counter) with one hand resting on the wall for support. Stand with one foot directly in front of the other foot.
- Put one heel in front of your toes like you are on a balance beam (“heel-toe, heel-toe”). (A)
- Walk forward for the length of your hallway or counter. Do not look at your feet as you walk. (B)
- Do this exercise for 2 to 3 minutes each day.

## ❑ Single leg stance



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### Did You Know?

You can make this exercise more challenging by:

- moving your head
  - right to left
  - or
  - up and down
- using your hands less for support.

- Stand near a chair (or wall or counter) with one hand resting on the chair for support.
- Stand on one leg and hold as long as you are able, working up to holding for 30 seconds. Do not look down.
- Repeat with the other leg.
- Do this exercise for 2 to 3 minutes each day.



# Stretching Exercises

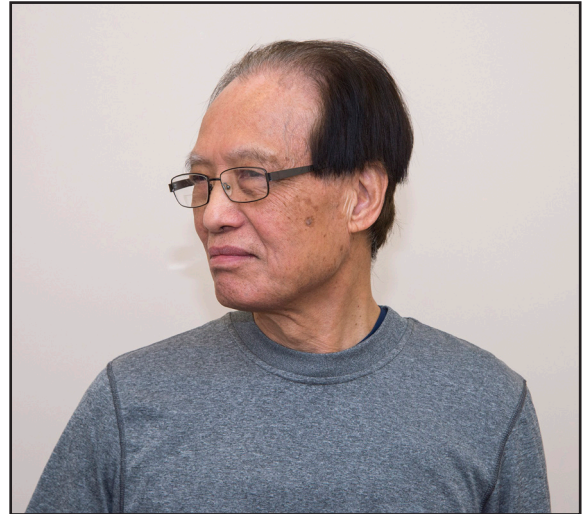
## Neck range of motion exercises

These neck exercises will help improve how far you can move your neck.

### ☐ Rotate



**A**

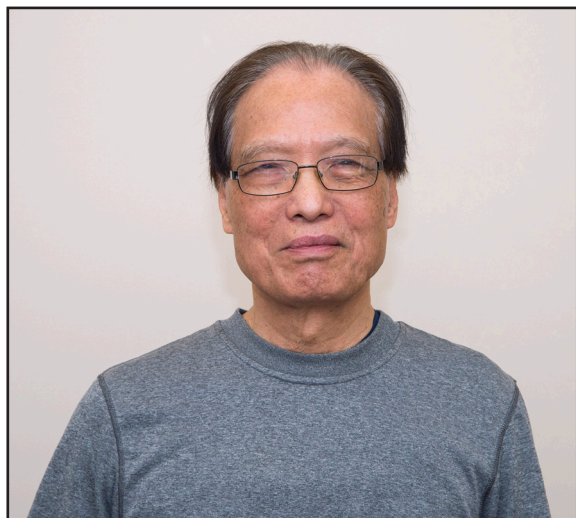


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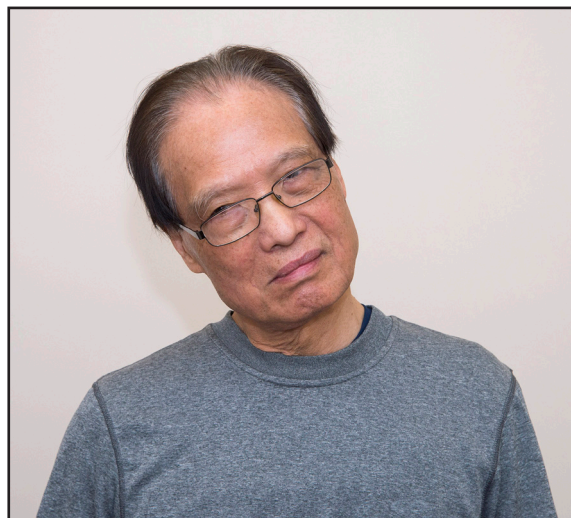
**B**

- Look straight ahead. (A)
- Turn your head slowly to look over your shoulder. (B)
- Turn as far as you can without feeling pain.
- Hold for 5 to 10 seconds.
- Repeat on the other side.
- Do this exercise 2 to 4 times each day.

## □ Bend to the side



**A**



**B**

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- Look straight ahead. (A)
- Tilt your head and your right ear toward your shoulder. (B)
- Tilt as far as you can without feeling pain.
- Hold for 5 to 10 seconds.
- Repeat on the other side.
- Do this exercise for about 1 minute each day.

## □ Chin tuck



**A**



**B**

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### Tip

Think of a turtle tucking its head into its shell as you do this exercise.

- Look straight ahead. (A)
- Tuck your chin down toward your throat. (B)
- Hold for 5 to 10 seconds.
- Do this exercise for about 1 minute each day.



## ❑ Doorway chest stretch

This exercise will help stretch the muscles in the front of your shoulders and chest.



**A**



**B**

© Allina Health System

- Stand in a doorframe.
- Keep your elbows bent and level with your shoulders. (A)
- Step one foot forward. Lean forward, bending your front knee, until you feel a stretch in the front of your chest. (B)
- Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.
- Do this exercise for 2 to 3 minutes each day.

## ❑ Calf stretch

This exercise will help stretch the muscles in the back of your lower leg (calf).



**A**



**B**

© Allina Health System

### Tip

You can also do this exercise with your back knee bent.

- Stand facing a wall. Put the leg you want to stretch behind you. (A)
- Keep your toes pointed forward and your heel on the floor.
- Lean forward until you feel a stretch in the calf of your back leg. (B)
- Keep your back knee straight.
- Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.
- Repeat with the other leg.
- Do this exercise for 2 to 3 minutes each day.



## ❑ Hip flexor stretch

This exercise will help stretch the muscles in the front of your hip and thigh.



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- Sit at the edge of a bed and slowly lower yourself into a lying position.
- Bring both legs to your chest while bending your knees.
- Hold one leg tight against your chest while slowly lowering your other leg toward the floor. You should feel a stretch in the front of the thigh or hip on the leg you lowered.
- Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.
- Repeat with the other leg.
- Do this exercise for 2 to 3 minutes each day.



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