

CHAIR BASED FLEXIBILITY PROGRAM (No equipment required)



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About this guide

All the exercises and stretches shown in The Parkinson's Training Center's guides and videos are performed by our clients, all of whom have been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. We encourage our clients to perform these stretches and exercises every day.

Flexibility exercises, or stretches, are used to improve your range of motion at your joints. A healthy functional range of movement is important for everyday life - for example, reaching overhead for something on a shelf or putting on a jacket.

Flexibility exercises are most effective when muscles have been warmed through light or moderate aerobic activity. You are therefore recommended to warm-up first before you engage in stretching.

Stretching is usually performed twice in a workout:

1. Warm-up stretches are carried out towards the end of the warmup (at the start of your workout), after mobilizing joints and performing some aerobic activity to warm muscles and boost circulation. Increased mobility is generally achieved through the preceding warm-up exercises.

The purpose of these warm-up flexibility exercises is to stretch the specified muscles in preparation for the work to come, and taking your joints through their full range of movement. Hold each stretch for a short time, 8-10 seconds – so you do not start to cool down if you are static for too long (thereby defeating the purpose of the warm-up).

2. Cool-down stretches are performed at the end of the cool-down. The purpose of these exercises is to achieve a good healthy functional range of movement and improve flexibility. Each stretch is held statically for longer than their warm-up counterparts; a minimum of 10-30 seconds is recommended.

This Flexibility guide had been provided by The Parkinson's Training Center and contains general advice only. It should not be relied on as a basis for a substitute for professional medical advice. The Parkinson's Training Center does not accept any liability arising from its use and it is the reader's sole responsibility to ensure any information is up to date and accurate.

Always consult your physician before engaging in strenuous physical activity.

How much stretching should I do?

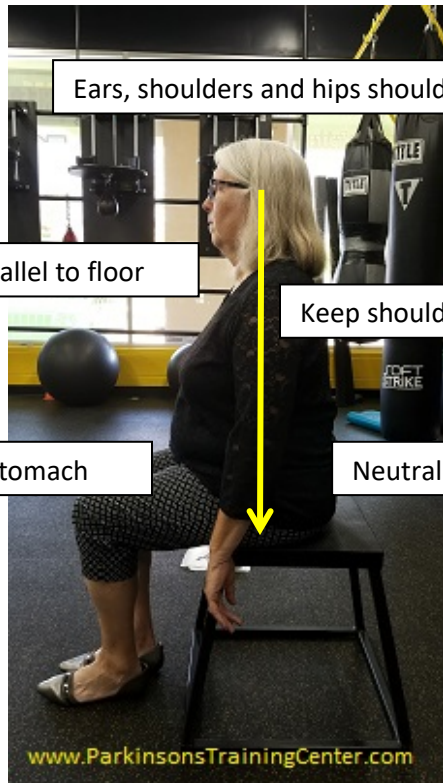
In the table below you will find the American College of Sport Medicine's recommendations for stretching (ACSM, 2014):

Frequency (how often)	At least 2-3 days per week, with daily stretching being most effective.
Intensity (how hard)	Stretch to the point of feeling tightness or slight discomfort.
Time (how long)	Holding these stretches for 10-30 seconds is recommended for most adults. It is recommended to repeat each stretch two to four times.
Type (what to do)	There are different types of stretches you can do. In this guide we only include static stretches performed from a seated position. For older adults, any physical activities that maintain or increase flexibility using slow movements terminating in sustained stretches are recommended for each major muscle group, using static stretches rather than rapid ballistic movements.

How quickly can I expect to see improvement?

ACSM (2014) state that range of motion (ROM) around joints improves immediately after stretching, with long-term improvements occurring after about three to four weeks (if you were to stretch at least two or three times a week).

Seated Posture



There are a lot of key points to remember here. Do not worry about remembering them all at once. Focus on a couple each time you exercise and you will soon become familiar.

Feedback from another person or from looking at yourself in a mirror is a good way of checking and improving your seated posture and form of exercise being undertaken



BREATHE COMFORTABLY AT
ALL TIMES

How hard will this be?

For beginners new to exercise this chair based stretch is considered to be:



For those accustomed to exercise this chair based stretch is considered to be:



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1. Triceps Stretch

Purpose:

- You will feel this stretch in the back of your arms and around your shoulders if you have reduced mobility in the shoulder area.

Instructions:

- Raise your left arm overhead.
- Bend the left arm at the elbow. Imagine trying to place your left thumb on the base of your neck. If you are able, stretch out your fingers and place the left hand (palm down) against your upper back.
- Place your right hand on the left elbow / upper arm and apply gentle upwards pressure to the left arm. You are performing a triceps stretch. Congratulations – great start!
- Apply & hold the stretch. Change arms!



2. Shoulder stretch

Purpose:

- This stretch will be felt in the muscles around the shoulder joint.

Instructions:

- Reach across your chest with the left arm. Keep your left arm as straight as you can.
- Grasp your upper arm above the elbow with the right hand and apply pressure, pulling the left arm across / into the chest.
- Repeat on the right arm.



3. Upper back stretch

Purpose:

- Feel this stretch in the muscles around your upper back.

Instructions:

- Place the back of one hand in the palm of the other. Raise hands to chest height. Do not interlock your fingers.
- Keep the body upright and press hands forwards at chest level. Aim to separate the shoulder blades by pressing forwards.
- Hold your stretch for the required time.



4. Pec (chest) stretch

Purpose:

- This will stretch the muscles of your chest.

Instructions:

- Extend your arms out to each side.
- Push your chest gently forwards and upwards until the stretch is felt across your chest.
- Hold your stretch for the required time.



5. Chest stretch

Purpose:

- This will stretch the muscles of the chest and front of the shoulders.

Instructions:

- Hold the back of your chair with both hands and lean slightly forward.
- Lift the chest gently upwards and allow your shoulders to draw back.
- Lean gently whilst maintain hold of the chair until you feel the stretch across our chest.




6. Wall pushes

Purpose:

- Upper back and shoulder stretch.

Instructions:

- Make a STOP sign with the left hand. 
- Press the left hand across the chest to an imaginary wall on the right.
- Push against the wall whilst twisting your body to the right as you do so.



7. Side bends

Purpose:

- This stretch is for our waist.

Instructions:

- With the right hand, leans sideways towards the floor, walking your fingers down the chair closer to the floor as you do.
- Try not to twist or lean backwards or forwards.
- Hold your stretch and then repeat on the opposite side.



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8. Upper back (hug) stretch

Purpose:

- You will feel this stretch in your upper back.

Instructions:

- Lift both arms out to your sides, level with the shoulders.
- Wrap your arms around your chest and give yourself a big hug!
- You can lower your chest towards your knees to give yourself an even bigger hug.
- As with other upper back stretches, try to feel your shoulder blades moving apart as far as possible.



9. Cat stretch

Purpose:

- This stretch is for the middle of your back.

Instructions:

- Place your hands on your thighs just above your knees.
- Push your feet into the floor and hands into thighs. Lift your shoulders up (hunch) as you drop your chin to the chest.



10. Dog stretch

Purpose:

- This will stretch muscles in your back.

Instructions:

- Place your hands on your thighs just above your knees, fingers pointing in.
- Push your feet into the floor and hands into thighs as you lift your chest. Push your hips back and arch your lower back.
- Hold and feel the stretch.



11. Back and hamstring stretch

Purpose:

- You will feel this stretch in your glutes (rear), back of thighs, and back.

Instructions:

- Bring a knee up towards your chest.
- Hug your knee with both arms, trying to open (spread) your shoulder blades as you do so.
- Hold for a few seconds, and then repeat with the other leg.



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12. Quad (thigh) stretch

Purpose:

- You will feel this stretch in the muscles on the front of your thighs.

Instructions:

- Turn to the right, so your right knee is bent with ankle under the knee – hold the back of the chair with the right hand for support
- Hold the left foot with the left hand, and pull your left heel towards your left buttock



13. Hamstring stretch

Purpose:

- This will stretch the muscles in the back of your leg

Instructions:

- Straighten your left leg; rest the heel on the floor with toes pointing up.
- Place both hands on your right thigh just above the knee to support your upper body (or on either side of the seat as shown in the photos).
- Bending from the hips, lean forwards until a stretch is felt in your left hamstring – keep your chest lifted up and sit tall throughout the stretch



14. Inner thigh stretch

Purpose:

- This is a stretch for your thighs.

Instructions:

- Move your feet so they are at least a shoulder width apart.
- Place your hands on the inside thighs.
- Keep your back straight and neck flat, lean forwards at the hips whilst gently pressing outwards with the hands



15. Calf stretch

Purpose:

- This will feel this stretch below the knee in the calf muscle.

Instructions:

- Holding the edges of the seat if necessary, straighten the left leg out in front, resting the heel on the floor so toes point upwards.
- Pull the toes of the left foot back towards the shin and slide the heel further forward until a stretch is felt in the left calf. In the picture Sharry has leant forward and added a slight pull on the toes using her left hand.
- Hold for a few seconds, and then repeat on the other leg.



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Photographs © The Parkinson's Training Center.
Featured: Sharry B. Boxing and Training Center client.

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