

Exercises for balance and coordination

Remember to do each exercise in sets of 10. Aim for a maximum of 3 sets.



Exercises marked with a star are good for improving your coordination and balance. There are more throughout our full exercise programme.

These exercises will help your balance and coordination. They are simple, but you'll need to concentrate to do them properly. They should not feel easy.

They focus on muscles surrounding your pelvis and spine – your core. These muscles are very important. They support your back and help reduce the chances of back problems.

Leg slides to the side *

Face a stable surface, like a table or kitchen counter top, and stand with your feet together.

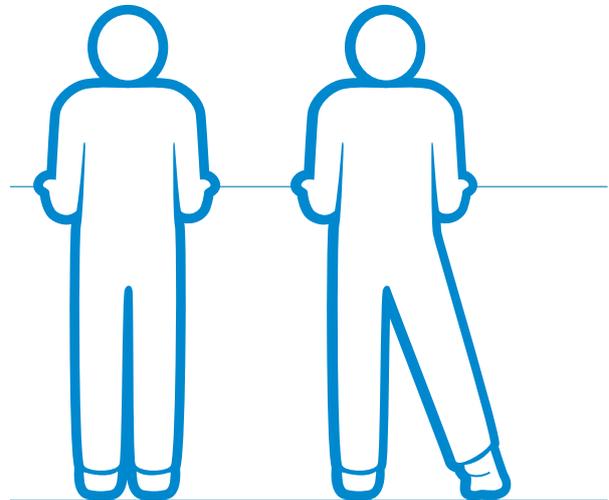
Press your hands firmly down on the surface, as if you were pushing yourself taller. Don't raise your shoulders. At the same time, slide one leg out a few inches to the side. Keep your toes facing forwards.

Bring the leg back to the middle, then relax your arms.

Level 1 – do this five times on each leg.

Level 2 – do this 10 times on each leg.

Level 3 – add an ankle weight.



Mini knee lifts *

This exercise works your inner tummy and back muscles without you knowing it.

Level 1 – Sit up straight with your bottom near the front of your chair and your feet flat on the floor. You should feel your weight on the two prominent bones in your bottom – your sitting bones. Place your hands on your knees.

Now lift one foot about half an inch off the floor, then slowly place on the floor again.

Repeat using the other foot.

Level 2 – hold your arms out to the side.

Level 3 – add a small weight to your ankle.



How hard should I work?

It depends what you're doing! Here's a guide:

For **aerobic** activity you want to feel **moderately to somewhat severely breathless**. You may feel slightly sweaty and your heart will beat faster too. This is normal.

During **strengthening exercises**, you should work your muscles hard for a short time until the muscles feel tired. You may also get a 'burning' sensation which is normal.

Use this scale to help you to see how hard you need to work – the words and numbers describe how short of breath you feel:

0	Nothing at all
0.5	Very, very slight (just noticeable)
1	Very slight
2	Slight
3	Moderate
4	Somewhat severe
5	Severe
6	
7	Very severe
8	
9	Very, very severe
10	Maximal

But getting breathless makes me anxious!

It's normal to get breathless when you're active. But if you're living with a lung condition, you may feel anxious when this happens. The key is to stay calm and learn ways to manage your breathlessness.

Remember, getting breathless when you exercise is good for you! By becoming more active, your body can use oxygen better. This will actually help you to feel less out of breath when you do everyday tasks.

Try the breathing techniques at [blf.org.uk/breathlessness](https://www.blf.org.uk/breathlessness)

The talk test

During aerobic activity, a quick way to check if you're working at the right level for you is to say out loud:

'This activity is doing me good!'

- If you can say the sentence with one or two stops for breath, you're working at a moderate intensity. This is your aim.
- If you can say it comfortably without stopping, increase the intensity.
- If you can't speak or can't say more than one word at a time, slow down and try to get your breath back a little on the go. Don't stop suddenly.

How can I stay safe when I exercise?

It's very important to look after yourself while you're active. Make sure you:

- start slowly and gradually build up
- warm up before and cool down after exercising
- carry your reliever inhaler and/or glyceryl trinitrate (GTN) spray if you have them. Use them when you need to
- wear loose, comfortable clothing and supportive non-slip shoes, like trainers
- drink plenty of water and wait for at least an hour after eating before you exercise
- use oxygen at your regular setting when exercising (if you normally use oxygen, even for just some of the time or overnight)
- are active at a level that's safe and right for you as advised by your health care professional.
- talk to your health care professional if exercise makes your chest feel tight or wheezy. You may find it beneficial to take a reliever inhaler 5-20 minutes before your exercise session, but you should discuss this with your health care professional first.

Should exercise hurt?

Exercise should not hurt. Pain **during** an exercise (beyond the usual aches and pains that are normal for you) means you should stop that activity and perhaps try a different one. Muscle soreness **after** exercise is a normal response if you haven't exercised for a while. It should settle in a day or two. Avoid exercises that make them sore until it settles.

STOP if you get any sudden unpleasant symptoms including:

- chest pain or tightness that is either new for you, or not relieved by your GTN if you use it
- feeling dizzy, nauseous, clammy or cold
- feeling increasingly wheezy
- general extreme fatigue
- weakness in an arm or leg that is more than just a tired muscle

Get advice from your GP or another health care professional if you experience any of the above or call 999 in an emergency.

Taken from the BLF exercise handbook. Version 5.

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