

## “Exercises at the Kitchen Sink”



This booklet is brought to you by  
Elgin St. Thomas Public Health and The Elgin Safety Team for Adults.

## “Exercises at the Kitchen Sink”

The exercises in the booklet consist of 7 activities from the Strategies and Actions for Independent Living program from the province of British Columbia. It is our hope that by following the suggestions in the booklet and doing the exercises you will improve your muscle strength, balance and endurance and reduce your risk of falling.

**Not all exercise programs are suitable for everyone.** Although you may be able to do these exercises easily, it is recommended you speak with your health care provider about the kind of exercises and activities you can safely do.

**You are never too old or young to start!**

This booklet developed by the Chatham-Kent Falls Prevention Coalition.



## Getting Active

Being active and doing exercises can reduce your risk of falling and help prevent injury from a fall. Find an activity that you enjoy, and do it.

Exercises at the Kitchen Sink:

- improve your balance
- increase your strength, endurance and flexibility
- help you sleep better
- improve your mood
- can be done in your home ...and are free!

People who do these exercises routinely report being stronger and looking and feeling better. Regular physical activity can help prevent diseases such as diabetes, dementia and some types of cancer.



## The Buddy System

It is sometimes hard to do regular physical activity on your own. Invite a friend to join you – have fun and socialize at the same time.

Remember, every little bit helps.

- plan some time each day to exercise
- exercise with someone else
- exercise at the same time each day – try it after breakfast or lunch
- write down the number of exercises you do each day



**Before you start your exercises be sure to check the following:**

Do you feel OK? Have you eaten?

Are you wearing shoes that have a non-slip bottom?

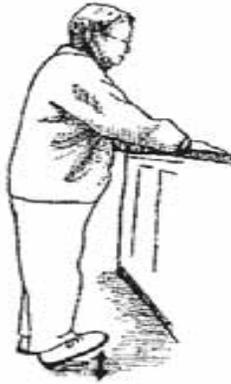
Is there any clutter, or things you could trip over around you?

## Do exercises you feel comfortable doing

- ◆ Start slowly and if necessary do just one of the exercises each day. Increase the exercises as you are able. Try a few every morning, afternoon and evening rather than trying to do them all at once.
- ◆ If any activity causes you increased pain or shortness of breath, do fewer or stop that activity and talk with your doctor.
- ◆ The exercises in this booklet are done while supporting yourself by holding onto a stable surface, such as a kitchen sink. Over time, as you get stronger, gradually decrease the amount of support you use through your hands, working towards not needing to hold on at all.
- ◆ Keep track of how many of each exercise you do. This will help you see your progress.

**Now let's begin**

## Exercise 1: Slow Toe Taps



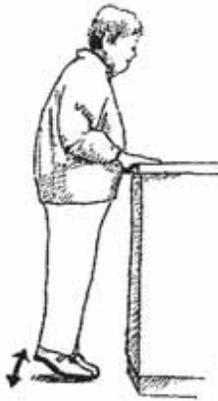
1. Stand facing the kitchen sink. Hold on with both hands.
2. Starting with the right foot keep the heel on the floor and lift your toes up.
3. Count 1, 2, 3 while you lift your toes and then lower them and relax.
4. Repeat with the left foot. Lift, 1, 2, 3 lower, relax.
5. Continue to do this 3 to 5 times with each foot. Do them slowly.

Gradually add one or more repetitions every few days until you can do this 15 times with each foot.

### Activity Checklist

- ✓ How are you feeling after this exercise?
- ✓ Are you ready to continue?

## Exercise 2: Up on Toes



1. Stand facing the kitchen sink. Hold on with both hands.
2. Raise up onto the toes of both feet. Come down slowly.
3. Again, up on toes, down slowly.
4. Continue doing this 3 to 5 more times if you can.
5. Gradually add one more repetition every few days or once a week until you can do this 15 times.

### Activity Checklist

- ✓ How are you feeling after this exercise?
- ✓ Should you stop, or are you okay to continue?
- ✓ As you are able, try to decrease the amount of support through your hands as your strength and balance improve.

### Exercise 3: Mini Squats



1. Stand facing the sink with your feet comfortably apart.
2. Hold on with both hands.
3. Bend your knees slightly keeping your back straight. Keep your heels on the floor.
4. Hold for a few seconds if you are able. Now straighten your knees.
5. Bend your knees slightly again, hold... then straighten. Do this 3 to 5 times.
6. Add one more squat every few days as you are able until you can do 15.

Remember don't bend too far – do a small squat only.

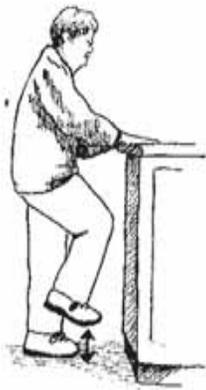
## Activity Checklist

- ✓ Were you comfortable doing this exercise?  
If so, please continue.
- ✓ Check your posture:
  - ◆ Stand tall and strong
  - ◆ Toes pointing forward, not turned in or out
  - ◆ Are your shoulders back and is your chin tucked in

It is okay to give yourself permission to quit if you have had enough for today.



## Exercise 4: Walking on the Spot



1. Stand facing the kitchen sink. Hold on with both hands.
2. Walk or march slowly on the spot. Count to 30.
3. Bring your knees up and slowly lower your foot back to the floor.  
Great work!
4. Every third or fourth day gradually increase the time spent walking by one minute.

When you are strong enough, you may want to begin walking around your home for a few minutes without stopping. When you do this, use the mobility aide that you normally use for walking.

### Activity Checklist

- ✓ How are you feeling after this exercise?
- ✓ Are you standing tall and strong?
- ✓ Are you ready to continue?

## Exercise 5: Alternate Leg Out and In



1. Stand facing the sink. Hold on with both hands.
2. Keeping your **toes pointing forward**, lift your left leg out to the side.
3. Hold this position for a few seconds if you can, then slowly lower leg back to the centre.
4. Now lift your right leg out to the side. Hold and lower back to the centre.
5. Keep alternating legs, left...then right...Repeat 3 to 5 times.
6. Keep strong and tall. Do not let your upper body sway.
7. Do one more set - including both left and right legs each week until eventually you can do 15 sets.

## Activity Checklist

How are you feeling after this exercise?

Remember, as your strength and balance improves try to decrease the amount of support through your hands.

- ◆ Try holding on with one hand, and a few fingers of the other hand.
- ◆ When you get comfortable with that, hold on with a few fingers of each hand.
- ◆ Now try to rest one finger of each hand on the counter.
- ◆ Then try one finger of one hand.
- ◆ When you are strong enough, try no hands.

You may not be able to do this in the beginning, but as you get stronger you will rely less on the support of your hands.

**Are you ready to continue?**

## Exercise 6: Alternate Leg Behind



1. Stand tall and strong facing the sink. Hold on with both hands.
2. Extend your left leg behind you without bending your knee.
3. Return your leg to the starting position.
4. Next extend your right leg behind you, then return.
5. Check that you are keeping your back straight and not leaning too far forward.
6. Continue alternating each leg, repeating 3-5 times.
7. Increase the amount you do every few days until you can do 15 sets.

## Activity Checklist

- ✓ How are you feeling after this exercise?
- ✓ Are you ready to continue?
- ✓ Before you continue, take a minute and check your posture:
  - ◆ Stand tall and strong
  - ◆ Feet on the floor with toes pointing forward
  - ◆ Keep your head up looking forward
- ✓ Rest if you need to.



## Exercise 7: Sit to Stand

It is important **not** to rush through this exercise.

1. Sit in a firm chair with the back of the chair against the wall if possible. If you have a walker place it in front of you - lock the brakes.
2. Bring your bottom a little closer to the front of the chair if needed.
3. Place your feet flat on the floor, close to the chair. Put your hands on the armrests.
4. Lean forward and stand up.
5. Stand tall for a few seconds, holding onto your walker if you need it for support.
6. Step back until you feel the chair against the back of your legs, reach back to hold the armrests, and slowly lower yourself to sit down in the chair.
7. When you are ready again, stand tall for a few seconds, then sit down. Do this 3 to 5 more times.
8. Do one more sit to stand every few days as you are able until you can do 15.



## Activity Check List

How are you feeling after completing all of the exercises you have selected to do at this time?

Remember:

- ◆ Mark your calendar as an exercise day
- ◆ As you feel stronger, try to use less support through your hands

**Give yourself a pat on the back for a job well done!  
You are taking charge of your health.**

Continue reading through this booklet to learn other things that can help keep you safe and independent!



## Most falls are predictable and preventable

You may be able to prevent a fall by making a few simple changes in and around your home.

Take a look around....  
Do you need to make changes?



For more ideas on how to prevent a fall, try the suggestions in this booklet and speak with your doctor or contact a health agency in your community.

## Health Management

See your doctor at least once a year for a check up.  
Let your doctor know if you have had a fall.

Things to check:

### Medications

- ◆ Keep an up to date list of all medications you take
- ◆ Review your medications at least once a year with your pharmacist or health care provider (including herbal & over the counter medicines)
- ◆ Ask about the side effects of the medication you take
- ◆ Use only one pharmacy
- ◆ Do not take old medications
- ◆ Ask for help if you are having difficulty managing your medications

Don't forget to check your:

Vision

Hearing

Teeth /dentures

## Are you at risk?

Find out if your nutritional health is at risk. If you answer "yes" circle the score for that question. Add up the circled numbers to get your Total Nutrition Score.

1	Do you have a condition that made you change what or how much you eat?	2
2	Do you eat less than 2 meals a day?	3
3	Do you eat only small amounts of fruit, vegetables, or milk products?	2
4	Do you often <b>not</b> have enough money to buy the food that you need?	4
5	Do you drink 3 or more alcoholic drinks everyday?	2
6	Do you have problems with your teeth or mouth that make it hard to eat?	2
7	Do you eat alone most of the time?	1
8	Do you take 3 or more different medications everyday?	1
9	Without wanting to, have you lost or gained 10 lbs in the past 6 months?	2
10	Is it hard for you to get groceries, cook or feed yourself?	2
	Your Total Nutrition Score =	

\*If you score 6 or more, you may be at high nutritional risk.  
Bring this checklist next time you see your health care provider.

Adapted from: Nutrition Screening Initiative, project of the AAFP, ADA, National Council on Aging.

## Healthy Eating

For better overall health, follow the recommendations from Canada's Food Guide for adults aged 51 and over:

	Male	Female	
Number of servings to eat from each food group	7	7	Vegetables and Fruit
	7	6	Grain Products
	3	3	Milk and Alternatives
	3	2	Meat and Alternatives

For a copy of Canada's Food Guide, or for information about meal programs in your area, please contact Elgin St. Thomas Public Health at 519-631-9900 or 1-800-922-0096

## Tips for Healthy Eating

- ◆ Instead of big meals, try eating small, healthy snacks every 2-3 hours.
- ◆ Take smaller bites and chew your food well.
- ◆ Add flavour to your food using herbs and spices instead of salt.
- ◆ When cooking, make extra food so you have leftovers.
- ◆ For a snack, try applesauce, fruit or yogurt.
- ◆ When you can, eat meals with family or friends.

- \* If you cough or choke when eating or drinking, you may have a swallowing problem. Talk to your doctor.
- \* If your teeth or gums are sore, or if your dentures do not fit well, it may be harder for you to chew and eat. Talk to your dentist.

## Drink Up!



At every age, it's important to drink enough fluid because it helps prevent dehydration, joint and muscle pain, and constipation.

Yet, as we get older, it gets harder to recognize when you're thirsty. Try keeping a water bottle with you wherever you go, and take sips throughout the day. Don't wait until you feel thirsty!

Health Canada recommends that men and women over 50 get about:

- ◆ 15 cups (3.7 L) of fluid everyday
- ◆ 11 cups (2.7 L) of fluid every day

Water is best, but other drinks and foods can also help you meet your fluid needs. These include: milk or soy beverage, 100% fruit or vegetable juice, herbal teas, and vegetables and fruit. Limit drinks with caffeine.

## Vitamin D

We need calcium to keep our bones strong, but it is also important to get enough vitamin D to help our bodies absorb the calcium. We can make vitamin D from sunlight, but this gets harder as we age.

- ◆ Older adults spend less time in the sunlight
- ◆ Some medications block vitamin D (Dilantin, prednisone, some laxatives)

Foods that have vitamin D include milk, fortified soy beverages, salmon and tuna. It is difficult to get enough vitamin D from food, so it is recommended that all adults over the age of 50 take a vitamin D supplement.

## Calcium

If you do not get 3 servings of milk or milk alternatives such as cheese or yogurt each day you may need to take a calcium supplement. These come in different forms such as chewable, tablets or liquid.

Many supplements have both vitamin D and calcium.  
Talk to your doctor or pharmacist to find a supplement that is right for you.

## Don't forget your fibre!

We all know that fibre is good for us, but why? Getting enough fibre:

- ✓ keeps you regular and prevents constipation
- ✓ improves blood sugars in people with diabetes
- ✓ keeps you feeling full for longer
- ✓ can lower levels of cholesterol and triglycerides in your blood
- ✓ lowers your risk of colon cancer, heart disease and digestive problems

### **Get more fibre everyday:**

- ◆ Start your day with high-fibre cereal (oatmeal, bran cereal)
- ◆ Have a fruit or vegetable with every meal and as a snack
- ◆ Eat the skins on your fruits and vegetables
- ◆ Add chickpeas, kidney beans, lentils and other beans to your soup, pasta and salad
- ◆ Choose whole grain or whole wheat bread, pasta and rice
- ◆ Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about taking a fibre supplement (Metamucil<sup>®</sup>, Benefibre<sup>®</sup>). \*\* Make sure to drink plenty of water

NOTE: If you use laxatives regularly, talk to your doctor.

## Ease the strain

There are many safety devices available to ease the strains of daily activities. They include equipment, mobility aids, practical daily aids and gadgets to suit all needs. Canes, grab bars, raised toilet seats and bath seats are just a few.

Speak with your doctor or any health care agency to see what may be available to help you remain independent and confident.



## Clothing and Footwear

Wear clothes that fit loosely, are easy to get on and take off and have simple closures.

Nightgowns, housecoats and pants that once fit may now hang down on the floor and cause you to trip.

Wear a shoe that fits well with a closed heel and a thin, non slip sole with good tread.



## Make your home a safer place

Most falls occur at home. Some simple changes can make your home safer for you.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In your home...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When you go out...
Place a night- light in the hallway and bathroom	Leave a light on by your door or steps
Leave space around your furniture Be clutter free	Don't be in a rush...take the time you need
Remove throw rugs	Keep steps and walkways in good condition
Get a portable phone & keep it within reach Don't rush to answer it - they will call back	Shovel or apply salt, sand or grit to melt snow and ice on steps and walkways
Keep the things you often use on easy to reach shelves	Paint the edge of all steps a contrasting colour (indoor and outdoor)
Coil or tape cords next to the wall and out of the way	Watch for and report cracked or uneven walkways

## Planning ahead may be helpful in the event that you do fall

As much as we try to prevent it, 1 in 3 seniors fall each year. Regular physical activity helps prevent falls and helps prevent injuries from falls. However, a fall may happen.

Consider the following to help you be prepared if you do fall.

- ◆ Use a personal alarm system
- ◆ Keep a portable phone or cell phone with you at all times
- ◆ Set up speed dial numbers on your phone
- ◆ Find a daily telephone buddy to connect with each day
- ◆ Carry a whistle
- ◆ Leave a spare key with someone you trust who can get to you quickly
- ◆ Learn how to get up off the floor if you fall and are not injured. Practice this when someone else is with you

## Practice makes perfect

### If you fall and can get up:

- ◆ Ease yourself up onto your elbows
- ◆ Move onto your hands and knees
- ◆ Hold onto a firm surface such as a chair or toilet to support yourself
- ◆ Face the surface and ease yourself to a standing position
- ◆ Turn yourself gently and sit on a firm surface

### What if you can't get up?

#### *Get someone's attention:*

- Shout or bang something against the wall
- Press your personal alarm button if you have one
- Use the telephone if you can

*Get comfortable:* Find a near by pillow or cushion or roll up an item of clothing to put under your head. Keep warm by covering yourself up with anything you can safely reach. Roll away from a damp area if your bladder "lets go".

Prevent stiffness and help your circulation by moving your position as you are able.

## Congratulations!

By continuing to do “Exercises at the Kitchen Sink” and following the suggestions in this booklet you have taken your first steps toward healthy, safe and independent living!



## Acknowledgements

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Kent District Women's Institutes

Chatham Kent Health Alliance

Ridgetown & Area Adult Activity Centre

Chatham-Kent Diabetes Wellness Program

VON Smart Program

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South West Ontario *in motion*

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The logo for the Government of Canada, featuring the word "Canada" in a serif font with a small Canadian flag to the right.

**Record the number of times each activity is done.**

<b><i>MONTH:</i></b>	<b>SUN.</b>	<b>MON.</b>	<b>TUES.</b>	<b>WED.</b>	<b>THURS.</b>	<b>FRI.</b>	<b>SAT.</b>
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2. Up on Toes							
3. Mini Squats							
4. Walking on the Spot							
5. Alternate Leg Out/In							
6. Alternate Leg Behind							
7. Sit to Stand							

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