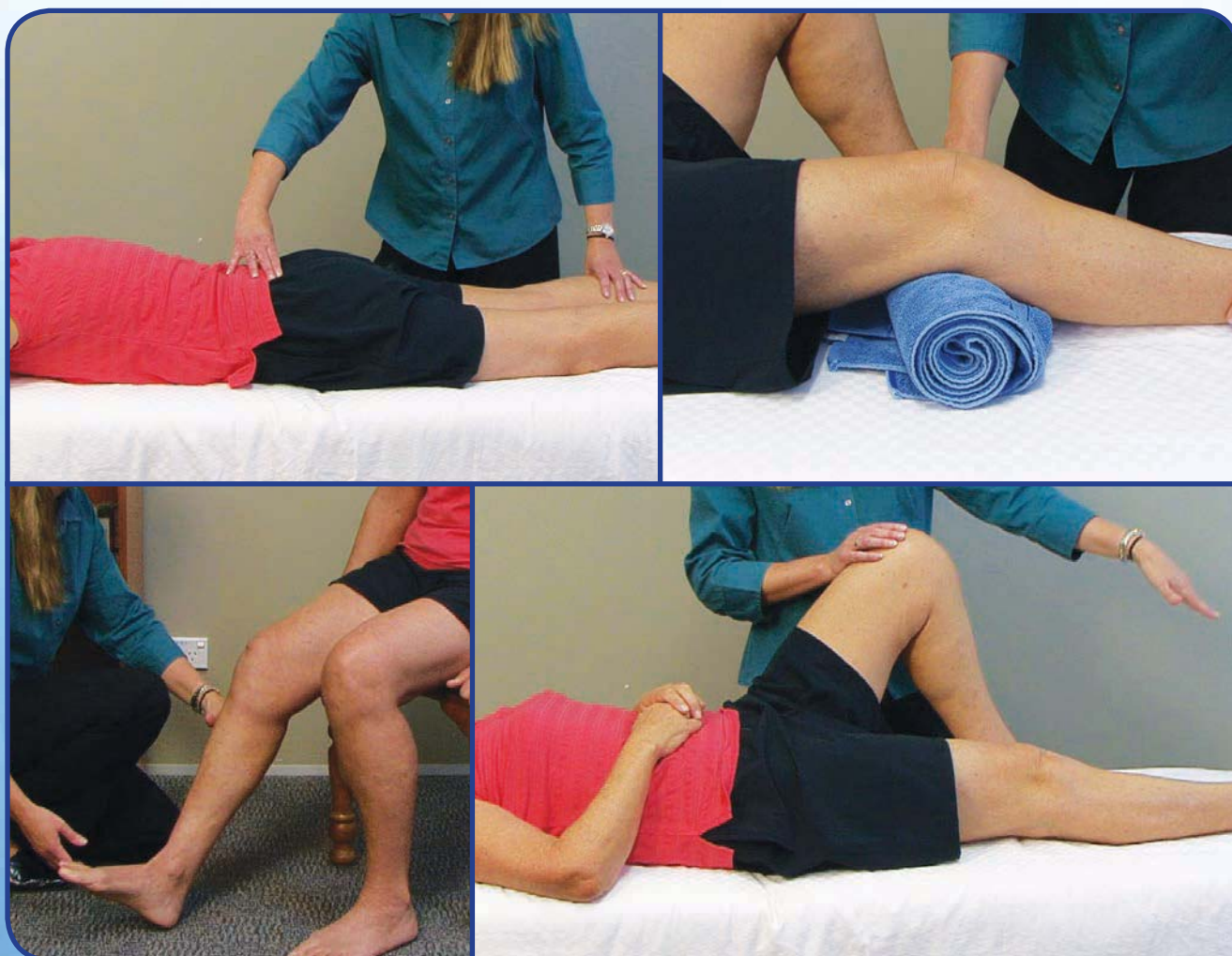




Level One Exercises



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Click on the Osteoarthritis (OA) Program link

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1. Warm up



Aim Warm up your muscles prior to doing your exercises and stretches.

Instructions

- Walk on flat ground for 2 minutes, trying to cover as much distance as possible in the 2 minutes without running.
- Stop at any point if you are in pain, are feeling too tired or feel light-headed. Start walking again once you feel capable of continuing.

Alternative If continuous walking is too difficult, walk 20 metres then rest or sit, walk 20 metres more. Repeat in this way for the 2 minutes.

Duration 2 minutes

2. Balanced sway



Aim Train balance muscles.

Instructions

- Stand upright facing a solid surface, with your thighs just touching the surface, eg. table or chair back.
- Step back a small amount (about half the length of your feet) – stand with your feet shoulder width apart, with your feet flat on the ground.
- Stand up straight – straight knees, straight back, look straight ahead with your fingertips just touching the back of the chair if needed for balance.
- Sway slowly forward until both thighs just touch the table/chair (do not lean on them).
- Hold for 3 seconds then move back to starting (upright) position.

Repetitions 10 times (3 x per week).

Tip Try not to overbalance or take a step.



3. Active ankle pump



Aim Stretch calf muscles and improve ankle mobility.

- Instructions**
- Sit (or lie) on a firm surface eg. your bed.
 - Keeping your knee straight, press your foot down so that you are pointing your toes away from you.
 - Pull your foot back, pulling your toes back towards your face.
 - The action is like pushing against the car accelerator pedal and releasing again.

Repetitions 20 times each leg (3 x per week).

Tip A strap or cord looped around the ball of your foot can help you pull your foot back towards you.

4. Calf strength against elastic tube



Aim Strengthen calf muscles (lower leg) and to improve ankle mobility.

- Instructions**
- Sit (or lie) on a firm surface eg. on your bed or a firm couch, with your leg out in front of you.
 - Loop your elastic tube twice around the ball of your foot.
 - Hold both ends of the elastic tube so that it is pulled tight.
 - Press your foot down as far as you can comfortably, pointing your toes away from you.
 - Slowly let your foot come back so the toes point to the ceiling.
 - The action is like pushing the accelerator of the car.

Repetitions 20 times on each foot (3 x per week).

Tip If the elastic tube is uncomfortable on your foot, do this activity with your shoes on. If you have delicate skin, wear thick socks for protection when using the exercise tube.



4b. Calf raises while sitting

(alternative exercise - if 'Calf strength against elastic tube' is too difficult)



Aim Strengthen calf muscles and improve foot mobility.

- Instructions**
- Sit upright in a sturdy chair eg. dining chair, sit with your feet and knees shoulder width apart.
 - Move your feet back so they are under your knees. Your feet should start flat on the ground. You may need to sit further to the front of the chair if your legs are short.
 - With both feet together, slowly rise up on your toes, and then lower your heels to the floor.

Repetitions 20 times (3 x per week).

Tip If this is too easy, put your hands on your thighs and lean some of your body weight through your arms. If this is too difficult you can do this with one leg at a time.

5. Heel slide



Aim Improve hip and knee mobility and hip flexor strength.

- Instructions**
- Lie on your back on a firm surface eg. your bed.
 - Start with both knees bent and feet flat on the bed.
 - One leg at a time, slide your foot down the bed away from you until your knee and hip are straight.
 - Keep your heel on the bed, slide the foot up the bed until it is as close to your buttocks as is comfortable.

Repetitions 20 times each leg (3 x per week).

Tip You may find it easier to slide your foot if you are wearing socks.



6. Lateral leg slides



Aim Strengthen hip adductor and abductor muscles.

- Instructions**
- Lie flat on your back on a firm surface with a pillow under your head eg. on your bed.
 - Keeping your knee straight and your foot flexed so your toes are pulled back towards you.
 - Slide one leg out to the side as far as is comfortable for you, keeping your knee straight and your toes pointed to the ceiling.
 - Slide the leg back to the starting position.

Repetitions 20 times each leg (3 x per week).

Tip You may find it easier to slide your foot if you are wearing socks or stockings.

7. Knee extension over towel



Aim Strengthen front thigh muscles (quads).

- Instructions**
- Sit or lie on a firm surface eg. on your bed.
 - Place a rolled up towel under one knee.
 - Start with your knee bent over the towel and the heel of your foot on the bed.
 - Tighten your front thigh muscle to push your knee down onto the towel and try to lift your heel off the bed. Try to straighten your knee as far as you can comfortably manage.
 - Slowly lower the heel to the bed.

Repetitions 20 times for each leg (3 x per week).

Tip If it is too difficult to straighten your knee, just press down onto the towel using your front thigh muscles without lifting your heel.



8. Prone (lying) buttock squeeze



Aim Activate gluteal muscles (buttocks) and stretch hip flexors.

- Instructions**
- Lie on your tummy on a firm surface with your feet over the end eg. on your bed.
 - Tighten your buttock muscles whilst pressing your pelvis down onto the bed, hold for a few seconds.
 - Relax.

Repetitions 20 times (3 x per week).

Tip If needed, you can position a pillow under your hips for comfort. Just lying flat on your stomach without activating any muscles is a useful stretch for your hip.

8b. Standing buttock squeeze

alternative exercise - if 'Prone (lying) buttock squeeze' is too difficult



Aim Activate gluteal muscles (buttocks) and stretch hip flexors (front hip muscles).

- Instructions**
- Stand up as straight as you can with both hands resting on a solid surface eg. a table or on the back of a chair.
 - With your body weight evenly distributed through both feet, try to straighten your knees and straighten your hips at the same time by pressing your pelvis towards the table or chair back.

Repetitions 20 times (3 x per week).

Tip Remember not to arch your back. Make sure you are keeping your 'core switched on' by sucking your tummy muscles in tight. Core refers to the major muscles in the belly, mid and lower back, hips, shoulders and the neck.



9. Prone (lying) hamstring leg curls



Aim Strengthen hamstring muscles (back of thighs), stretch quad muscles (front of thighs), and mobilise knee.

Instructions

- Lie on your tummy on a firm surface eg. on your bed.
- Try to keep your hips close to the bed throughout this exercise.
- One leg at a time bend your knee so your heel comes up towards your buttocks.
- Keep bending your knee as far as is comfortable for you, then slowly lower the foot back down till the knee is straight again.

Repetitions 20 times each leg, smoothly and slowly (3 x per week).

Tip If needed you can lie with a pillow under your hips for comfort

9b. Standing hamstring curls alternative to 'Prone (lying) hamstring leg curls'



Aim Strengthen hamstring muscles (back of thighs), stretch quad muscles (front of thighs), and mobilise knee.

Instructions

- Stand up straight with one or both hands holding a stable piece of furniture eg. a table or the back of a heavy chair.
- Stand with all of your weight on one leg keeping your knee straight.
- Bend the other knee so your heel comes up towards your buttocks.
- Keep bending the knee as far as is comfortable for you then lower the foot back down again until your leg is straight again.

Repetitions 20 times each leg, smoothly and slowly (3 x per week).

Tip Keep the front of both knees and thighs in line with one another. Do not bend forward at your hips. If you need help lifting your foot, holding a strap such as a dressing gown cord looped twice around the ankle, can help you to lift your foot up behind you.



10. Groin stretch in sitting



Aim Stretch inner thigh (adductor) muscles and improve hip joint mobility.

- Instructions**
- Sit on the edge of a sturdy chair.
 - Have feet as close together as is comfortable for you.
 - Move your knees as far apart as you can comfortably, (your heels will lift up as you roll outwards).
 - Bring your knees back together and repeat.

Repetitions 10 times (3 x per week).

Tip You can make this easier if you use your hands to help move your thighs.

11. Sitting hamstring leg curls



Aim Strengthen hamstring muscles (back of thighs), stretch quad muscles (front of thighs), and mobilise knee.

- Instructions**
- Sit towards the front of a stable chair.
 - Rest one of your feet lightly on the floor.
 - Bend your knee so your foot slides under the chair.
 - Bend as far as is comfortable for you, then straighten the knee so the foot slides out in front of you.

Repetitions 20 times each leg (3 x per week).

Tip Remember to keep your back straight. Do not bend over.
A plastic shopping bag placed under your foot will help it slide more easily on the floor.



12. Cool down



Aim Cool down after doing your exercises.

Instruction

- Walk on flat ground for 2 minutes, try to cover as much distance as possible in the 2 minutes without running.
- Stop at any point if you are in pain, feeling too tired or light-headed. Start walking again once you feel capable of continuing.

Repetitions 2 minutes.

Tip If continuous walking is too difficult, walk 20 metres then rest or sit, walk 20 metres more. Repeat in this way for the 2 minutes.