

Gentle Seated Stretches

A simple daily routine for wheelchair users and anyone who spends most of the day sitting. Every stretch can be done from a chair, at your own pace, with no equipment.

Before you begin

- **Check with your doctor first.** Share this routine at your next visit, especially after surgery, a fall, or a new diagnosis.
- **Lock your wheels.** Make sure your wheelchair brakes are set or your chair is steady before you start.
- **Sit tall.** Keep both feet flat on the floor or footrests, with your back supported.
- **Breathe slowly.** Exhale as you move into each stretch. Never hold your breath.
- **Move gently.** Stretch until you feel light tension, never pain. Do not bounce.
- **Go at your pace.** Skip anything that does not feel right today. Some days are easier than others.

HOW OFTEN

Once a day, or split the routine into morning and afternoon halves.

HOW LONG

Hold each stretch 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 2 to 3 times per side.

WHAT YOU NEED

A steady chair or locked wheelchair. A towel or strap is optional.

Stop right away and tell someone if you feel:

Sharp or sudden pain · Dizziness or lightheadedness · Chest pressure or tightness · Trouble breathing · Numbness or tingling that does not pass

Neck, shoulders, and arms

1 **Chin tucks**

Sit tall and look straight ahead. Gently draw your chin back, as if making a double chin, until you feel a stretch at the base of your skull. You should feel it in the back of your neck.

HOLD 5 SECONDS · REPEAT 5 TIMES

2 **Ear to shoulder**

Slowly tip your right ear toward your right shoulder. Keep both shoulders relaxed and down. Return to center, then repeat on the left. You should feel it along the side of your neck.

HOLD 15 TO 20 SECONDS EACH SIDE · 2 TIMES PER SIDE

3 **Shoulder rolls**

Lift both shoulders up toward your ears, roll them back, then let them drop. Move slowly and smoothly, like drawing circles with your shoulders.

10 ROLLS BACKWARD · 10 ROLLS FORWARD

4 **Shoulder blade squeeze**

Sit tall with your arms relaxed at your sides. Squeeze your shoulder blades together behind you, as if holding a pencil between them. Keep your shoulders down, away from your ears.

HOLD 5 SECONDS · REPEAT 8 TIMES

5 **Overhead reach**

Reach one arm toward the ceiling, or as high as is comfortable. Feel your side lengthen. Lower slowly and switch arms. If reaching overhead is hard, reach forward instead.

HOLD 10 TO 15 SECONDS EACH ARM · 2 TIMES PER SIDE

6 **Chest opener**

Place your hands behind your head, or rest them on your shoulders. Gently draw your elbows back and lift your chest. You should feel a stretch across the front of your chest.

HOLD 15 SECONDS · REPEAT 3 TIMES

Hands, trunk, and legs

7 **Wrist and finger stretch**

Extend one arm forward with your palm up. With the other hand, gently pull your fingers back toward the floor. Then make a loose fist and circle your wrist in both directions.

HOLD 10 SECONDS EACH HAND · 5 WRIST CIRCLES EACH WAY

8 **Seated trunk turn**

Sit tall and place your right hand on the outside of your left knee, or on your armrest. Slowly turn your shoulders to the left, looking over your shoulder. Keep the turn gentle and your hips facing forward. Repeat to the other side.

HOLD 15 SECONDS EACH SIDE · 2 TIMES PER SIDE

9 **Side bend**

Hold your armrest or seat with one hand. Reach the other arm up and over your head, leaning gently to the side. You should feel it along your side, from hip to underarm.

HOLD 10 TO 15 SECONDS EACH SIDE · 2 TIMES PER SIDE

10 **Knee extension**

Sit tall and slowly straighten one knee, lifting your foot until you feel a gentle stretch behind your thigh. Keep your back against the chair. Lower slowly and switch legs. Skip this one if your legs are supported by elevated footrests.

HOLD 10 SECONDS EACH LEG · 3 TIMES PER SIDE

11 **Ankle pumps and circles**

With your heel resting on the floor or footrest, point your toes away from you, then flex them back toward you. Then draw slow circles with each foot. This also helps healthy circulation in your lower legs.

10 PUMPS AND 5 CIRCLES EACH DIRECTION, EACH FOOT

12 **Hand opener**

Spread your fingers wide like a star, hold, then relax into a loose fist. A soft ball or rolled washcloth makes a good gentle squeeze if you have one nearby.

REPEAT 10 TIMES EACH HAND

Small movements, done daily, add up

Pair it with something you already do

Stretch after your morning coffee, during a favorite program, or before lunch. Routines stick when they attach to habits you already have.

Keep this guide where you sit

Print this page and keep it by your chair. Checking off a daily stretch session is a small win worth keeping track of.

Do what you can today

Three stretches done gently are better than twelve done in a rush. The goal is comfort and consistency, not performance.

Invite a partner

Stretching together is a natural way for family or a caregiver to spend time with you, and a second set of eyes adds safety.

FROM OUR CARE TEAM

A caregiver can make movement part of every visit

Jane's Home Care is a nurse practitioner led home care agency serving Fresno, Clovis, and the surrounding Central Valley. Our caregivers can build gentle movement, fall prevention, and daily encouragement into a care plan that fits your routine. Care can begin within 24 hours.

Call (559) 296-2189 or build your own care plan at janeshomecare.com/care-plan

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