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TEAM Exercises

Twenty Exercises for Arthritis Management (or TEAM), which was reviewed and approved by member sports medicine physicians of AOSSM, is a 40-minute, low-impact workout that is invigorating and fun. With the help of a few household items such as a chair and a towel, these stretches can help you manage your arthritis pain and improve your quality of life. Before you begin the exercises, remember:

- Proper warm-up is key to avoiding injury. Be sure to walk in place for at least five minutes to increase your heart rate before beginning the following stretching and resistance exercises.
- As always, you should consult your physician before beginning any exercise program.
- If at any point during this exercise program you experience shortness of breath, feel light-headed or faint, or have pain or tightness in your chest, stop the exercises immediately and consult a physician.



Shoulder Stretch

Interlace fingers so palms face outward. Slowly lift arms above head, pushing upward (stretch will be felt in arms, shoulders, and upper back). Hold for 10 seconds.



Arm Stretch

Gently Pull right elbow across the chest toward the opposite shoulder. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat with left arm.



Knee Chest Stretch

Lay with back flat against mat, pull right knee towards chest, keeping back of head on the floor. Hold for 20-30 seconds. Repeat with left knee.



Calf/Achilles Stretch

Hold chair with both hands, place right leg in front of left, bending the right knee while keeping left leg straight. Lower hips downward while continuing to slightly bend right knee. Keep back straight and back foot toe facing straight ahead, keeping heel down. Repeat stretch on other side.

Hamstring Stretch

Sit on mat and stretch both legs out in front of you. Grab towel at each end, placing it around the arches of your feet. Using straight arms, pull upper body down gently to stretch behind the legs. Hold for 30 seconds.



Quad Stretch

Hold chair with right hand while standing with weight on left foot. Hold top of right foot with left hand. Gently pull right heel toward buttocks. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat stretch on other side.



Modified Squat

Stand in front of chair facing forward. Place feet hip-width apart, toes pointed out slightly, weight evenly distributed. With shoulders back, cross arms over chest, and lean forward slightly from the hips, keeping back straight and abs tightened. Bending at the hip, slowly lower buttocks toward chair. Pause, then push up from the chair using the same body positioning; be sure not to lock knees. Repeat 8 to 12 times, resting for 30 to 60 seconds between sets.



Squat and Side Lift

With chair on right side for balance, stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Bend slowly at the knees and hips, and squat back as though sitting in a chair; stop when thighs are parallel to floor. Keep back flat, not allowing knees to extend past toes. Pause, then push up, lifting left leg off floor and to the side while beginning to stand. Pause then return to starting position. Repeat 8 to 12 times on each leg. Rest for 30 to 60 seconds and repeat.



Knee Flexion

Stand up straight with head in line with spine, legs hip-width apart, and knees slightly bent while placing hands on back of chair for balance. Maintaining good posture, raise left heel toward buttocks until your calf is parallel to the floor. Make sure to keep thighs parallel to each other. Pause for 1 second. Lower left leg to the ground. Complete 10 to 12 repetitions on one side and then repeat on the other. Rest for 30 seconds and repeat.



Knee Extension

Sit on chair with back and hips against the chair back. Extend left leg out as straight as possible, pausing for 1 second when leg is parallel to the floor. Lower left leg back to starting position. Complete 10 to 12 repetitions on each side and rest for 30 seconds. Repeat.



Calf Raises

Stand about one foot behind the back of the chair with feet hip-width apart and knees slightly bent. Keep back straight, head in line with spine, and shoulders back. Using chair for balance, raise heels off floor, pushing straight up onto balls of feet. Pause 1 second, then slowly lower heels to starting position. Complete 10 to 12 repetitions, rest for 30 seconds, and repeat.



Shoulder Rotation

Sit in chair with elbows bent at side, placing Theraband around wrists. Keeping elbows at side, spread forearms comfortably apart. Complete two sets of 10, resting for 30 to 60 seconds between sets.



Ab Curl

With knees bent, feet and back on floor, hold ball in both hands, letting weight rest lightly on chest; keep elbows out to the side. In one move, contract chest muscles and straighten arms, pushing ball up above chest. At the same time, contract ab muscles, lifting head and shoulders off floor about 30 degrees. Hold for a second, lower ball down to the body while lowering head and shoulders to floor. Complete two sets of 8 to 10 lifts, resting for 30 to 60 seconds between sets.



Abdominal Crunches

Lie on mat, knees bent, feet flat on floor. Cross arms in front of chest and lift back off the mat (about 1 inch) while exhaling. Return to floor while inhaling. Complete two sets of 10, resting for 30 to 60 seconds between sets.



Elongation Stretch

Lay with your back flat against the mat, extending both arms and legs. Reach as far as is comfortable; point toes and extend fingers. Hold for 5 seconds.



Elongation Diagonal

Turn on left side. Point toes of left foot and extend right arm, stretching lengthwise as far as is comfortable. Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat on right side. Repeat Elongation Stretch.

