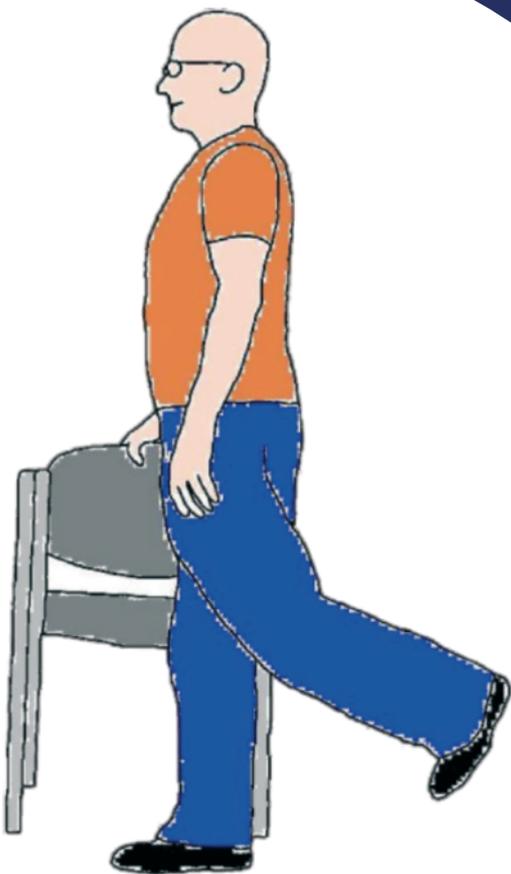


# POSTURAL STABILITY STRENGTH & BALANCE

Home Exercise Programme



**laterLife**  
**training.**

**Text by Sheena Gawler**  
Research Associate, Research Department of Primary Care and Population Health  
University College London Medical School  
Co - Development Lead & Senior Tutor, Later Life Training

**Illustrations by Simon Hanna**  
Falls & Exercise Clinical Practitioner, Cambridgeshire Falls Service  
Senior Tutor, Later Life Training

# Safety

Ensure that the chair you use is sturdy and stable. Wear comfortable clothes and supportive footwear.

Prepare a space and have your exercise band and a glass of water (for afterwards) ready before you start.

While exercising, if you experience chest pain, dizziness or severe shortness of breath, **stop immediately** and contact your GP (or call an ambulance if you feel very unwell and your symptoms do not go away when you stop exercising).

If you experience pain in your joints or muscles, stop, **check your position** and try again. If the pain persists, seek advice from your Postural Stability Instructor. However, feeling your muscles working or slight **muscle soreness** the next day after exercise is **normal** and shows that the exercises are working.

Breathe normally throughout and enjoy yourself.

Aim to do these exercises twice per week **in addition** to your exercise class.

If you are using this booklet without attending a supervised exercise session, consult your GP to check it is suitable for you.

# Warm Up Exercises

Always begin with a warm up to prepare your body for the main exercises.

There are 4 warm up exercises.

Complete them **all**:

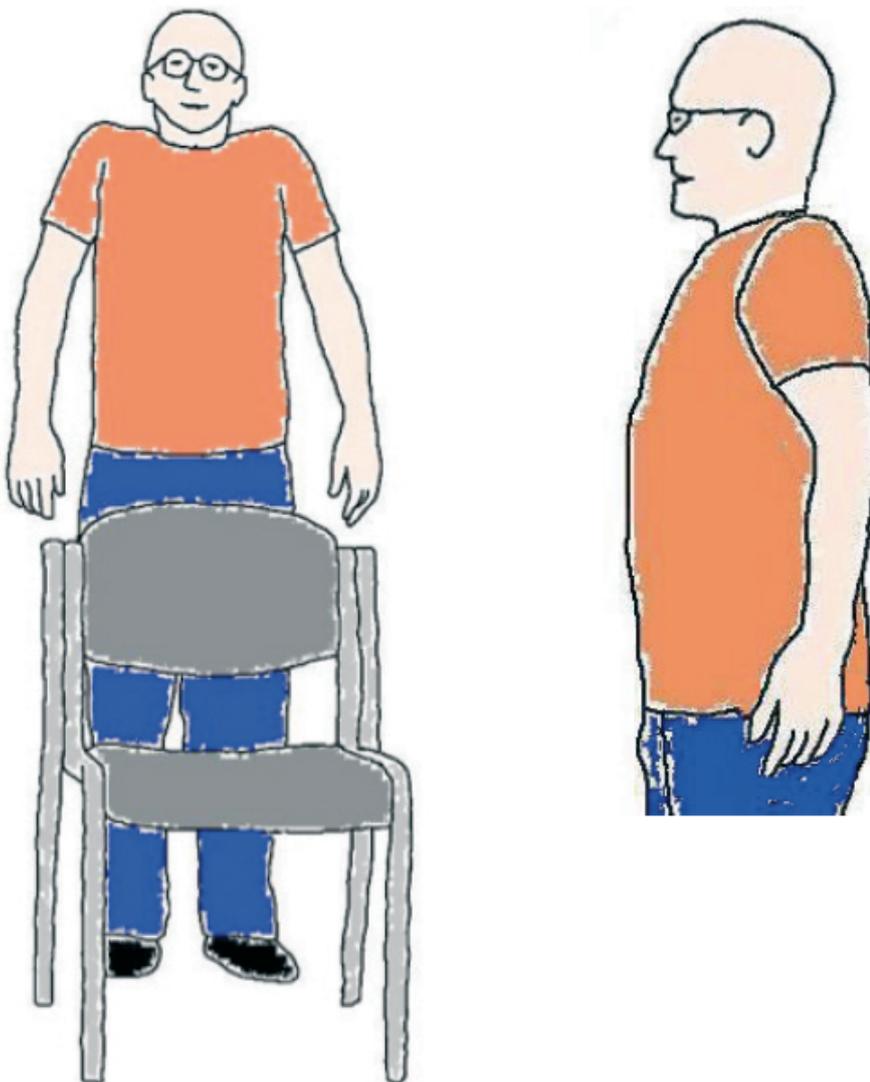
# March

- Stand (or sit) tall
- Hold the back (or sides) of the chair
- March with control
- Build to a rhythm that is comfortable for you
- Continue for 1-2 minutes



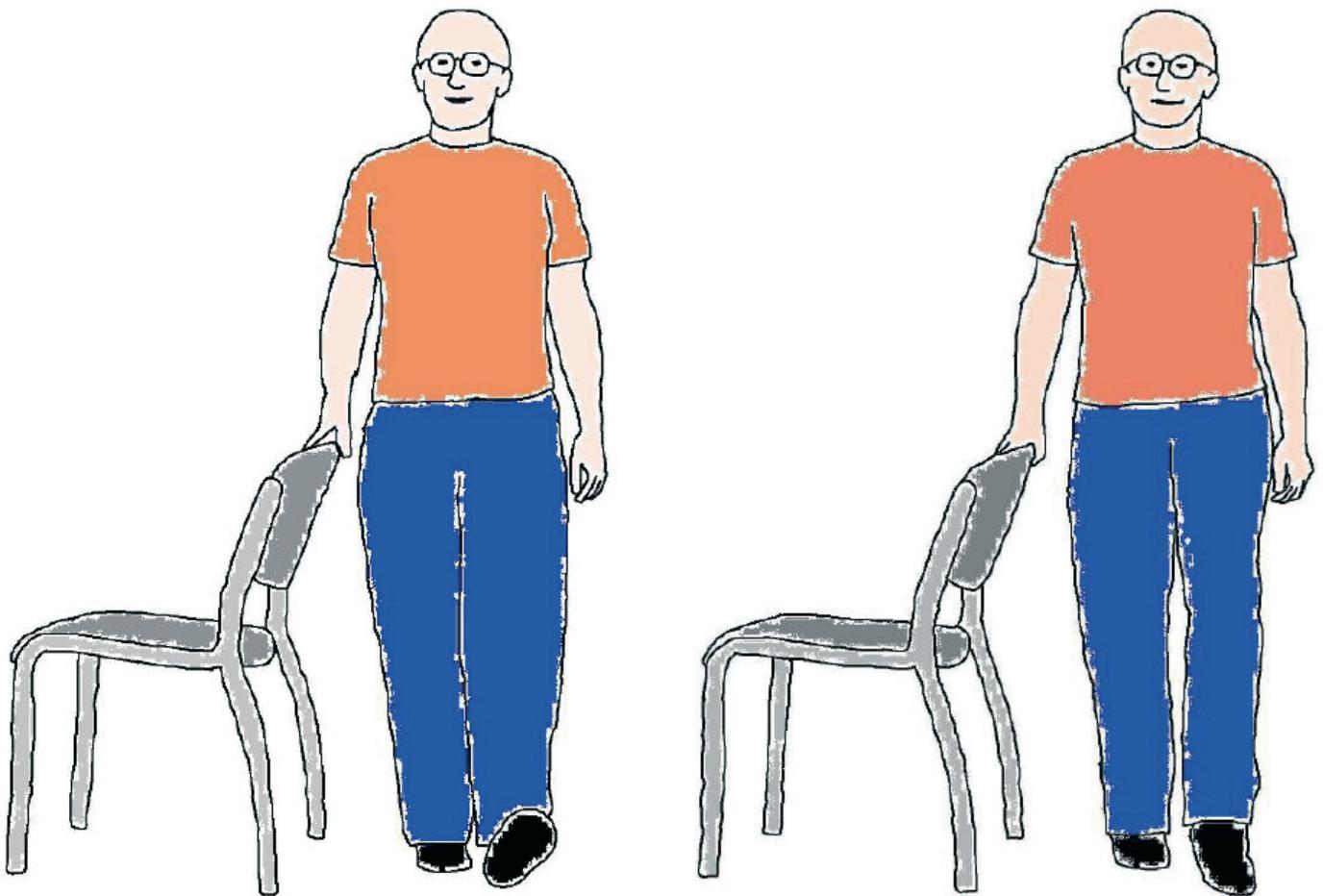
# Shoulder circles

- Stand (or sit) tall with your arms at your sides
- Lift both shoulders up to your ears, draw them back then press them down
- Repeat slowly 5 times



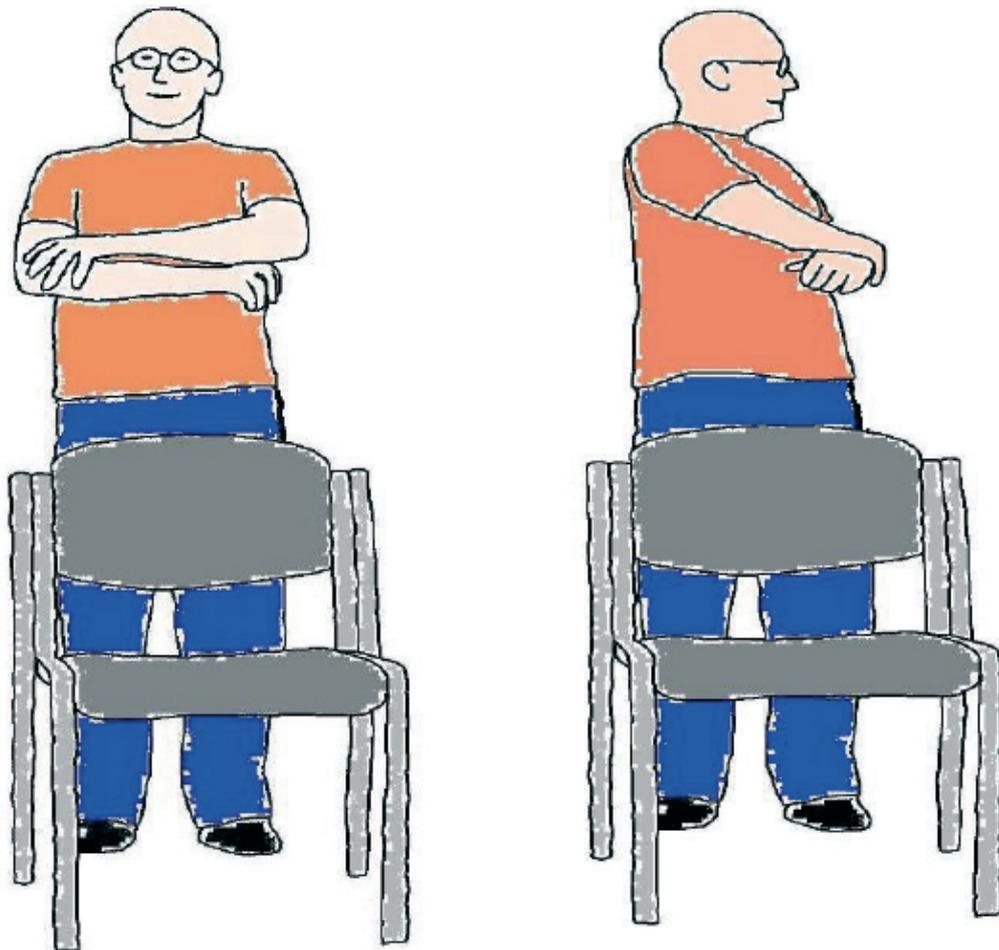
# Ankle loosener

- Stand side on to (or sit tall at the front of) the chair
- Pull up tall
- Hold the back (or sides) of the chair
- Place the heel of one foot on the floor then lift it and put the toes down on the same spot
- Repeat 5 times on each leg



# Spine twists

- Stand (or sit) very tall with your feet hip width apart
- Fold your arms across your chest
- Twist your upper body and head to the right keeping your hips forwards
- Repeat on the opposite side
- Repeat 5 times



# Main exercises

There are **10** exercises in this section.

Complete them **all**.

Aim to do them twice per week on top of your exercise class and walks.

**The first 6 exercises are to help improve your balance**

# Heel raises

- Stand tall holding a sturdy chair, table or the sink
- Raise your heels taking your weight over your big toe
- Hold for a second
- Lower your heels with control
- Repeat 10 times



# Toe walk

- Stand tall and side on to your support
- Raise your heels (weight over big toe as before) then take 10 small steps forwards
- Bring your feet together then lower your heels with control
- Repeat in the other direction



# Toe raises

- Stand tall holding your support
- Raise your toes taking your weight back into your heels without sticking your bottom out
- Hold for a second
- Lower your toes with control
- Repeat 10 times



# Heel walk

- Stand tall and side on to your support
- Raise your toes without sticking your bottom out then take 10 small steps forwards
- Lower your toes with control
- Repeat in the other direction



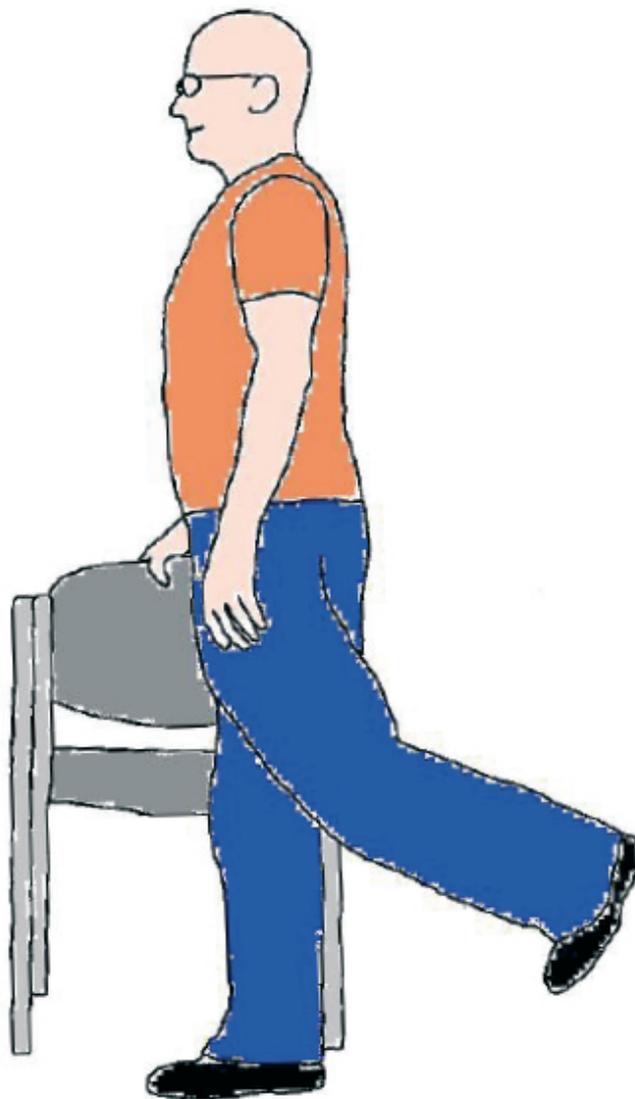
# Side steps

- Stand tall facing your support
- Take a sideways step keeping the hips forward and the knees soft
- Repeat side to side 10 times, building to a comfortable rhythm



# Flamingo swings

- Stand tall and side on to your support
- Swing the leg furthest from the chair forwards and back with control
- Perform 10 swings
- Repeat on the other leg

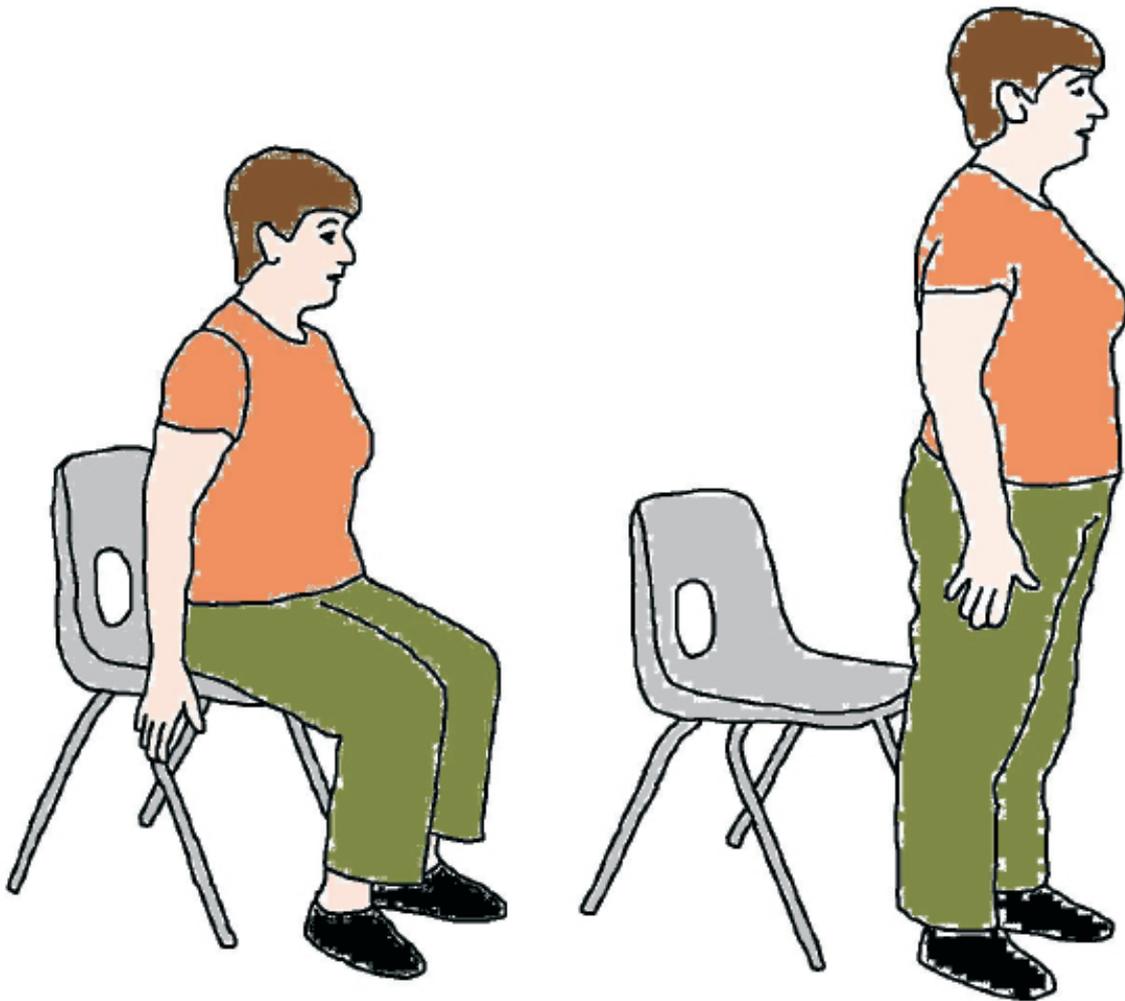


# Main exercises

The following 4 exercises are to help improve your bone and muscle strength.

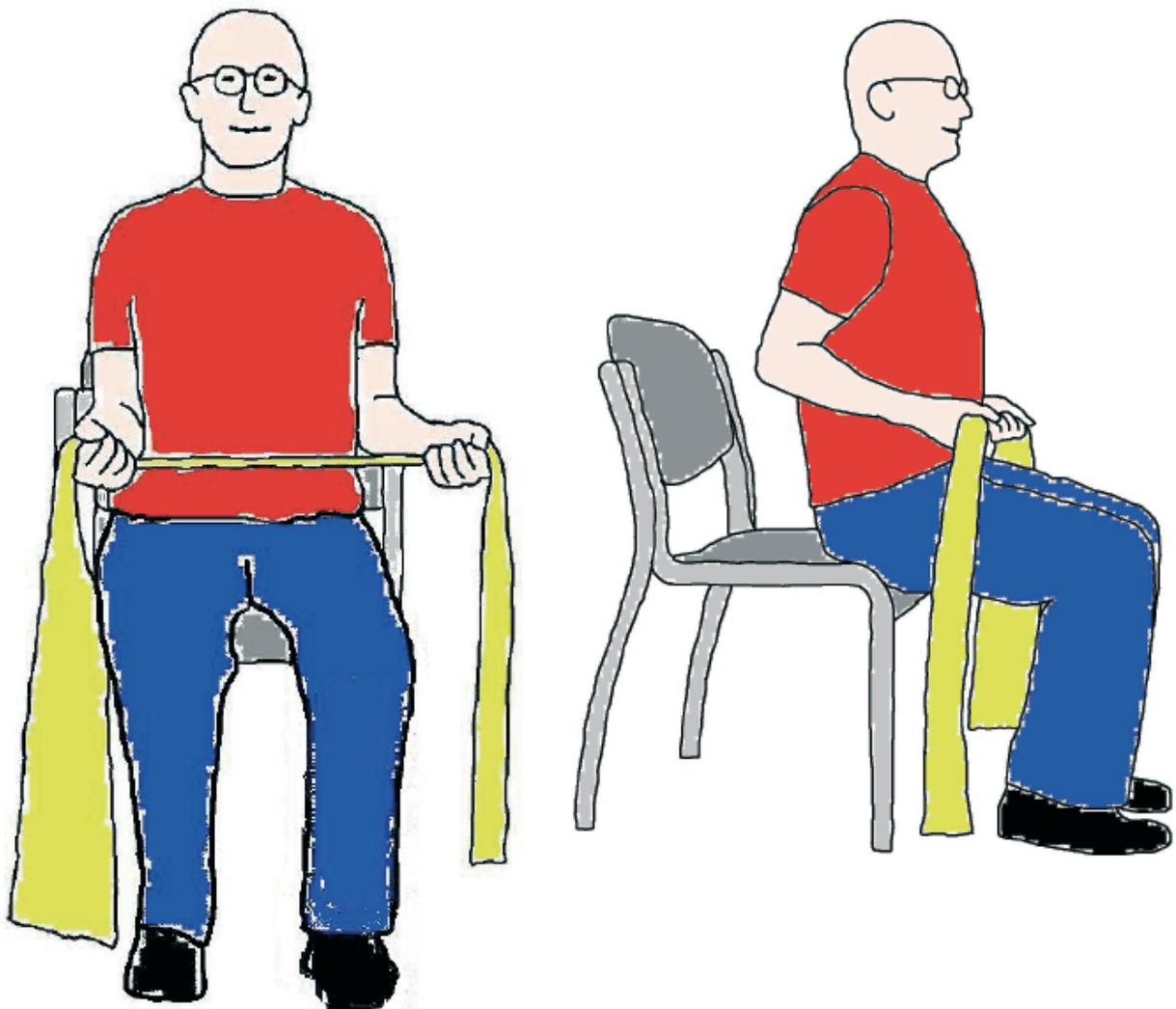
# Sit to stand

- Sit tall near the front of the chair
- Place your feet slightly back
- Lean forwards slightly
- Stand up (using your hands on the chair if needed)
- Step back until your legs touch the chair then slowly lower your bottom back into the chair
- Repeat 10 times



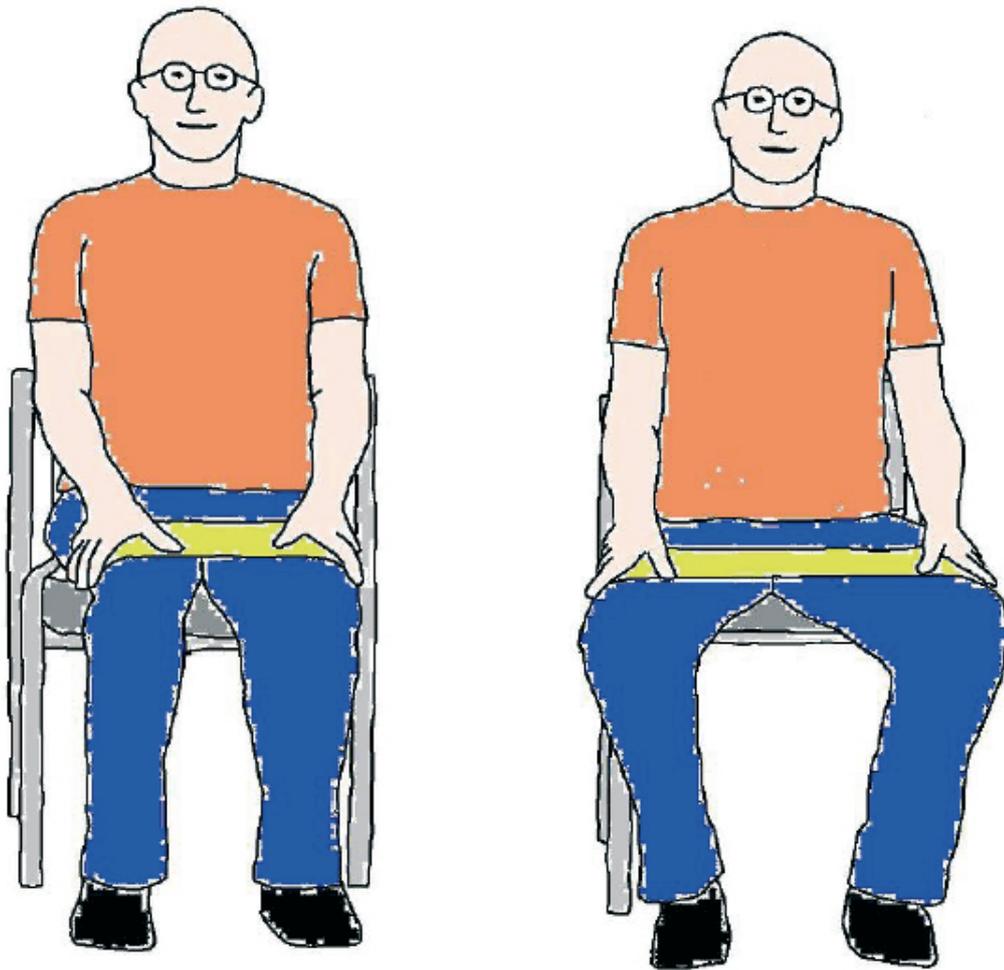
# Upper back strengthener

- Hold the band with your palms facing upwards and your wrists straight
- Pull your hands apart then draw the band towards your hips and squeeze your shoulder blades together
- Hold for a slow count of 5 whilst breathing normally
- Release, then repeat 7 more times



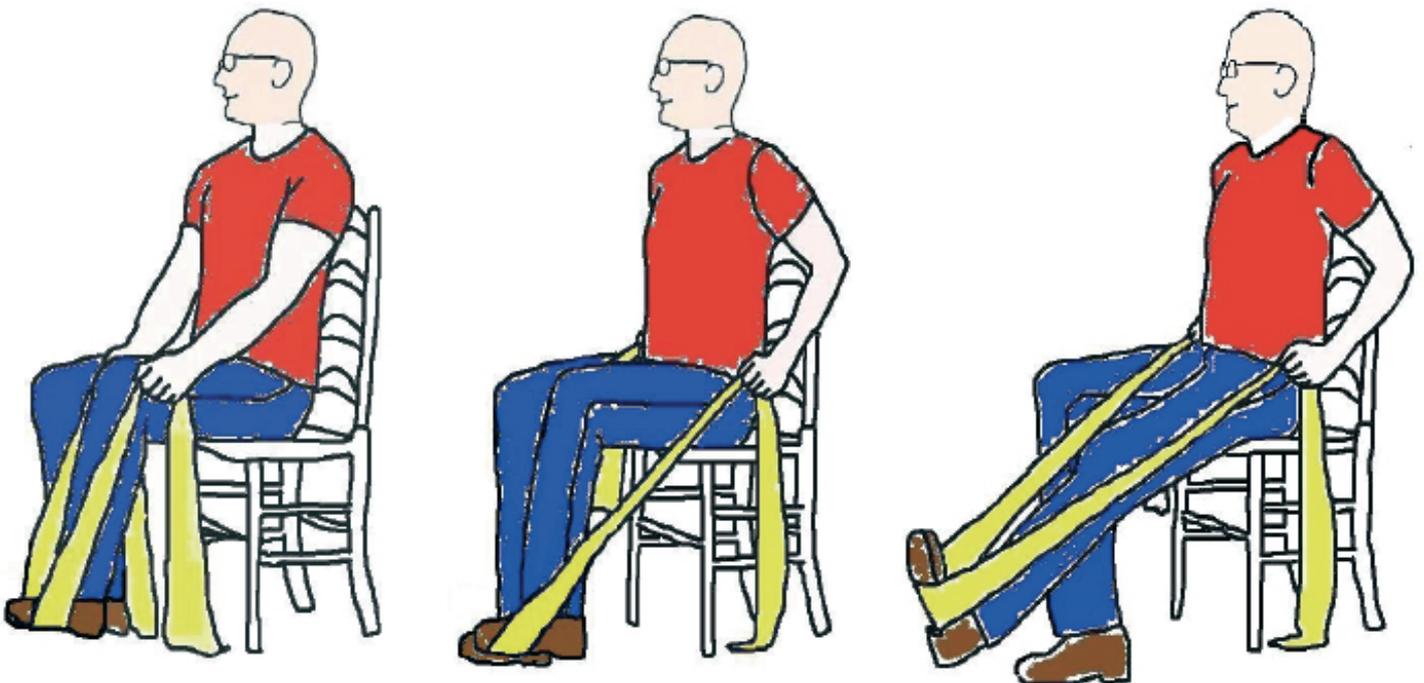
# Outer thigh strengthener

- Sit tall near the front of the chair with your feet and knees touching then wrap the band around your legs (keeping the band as flat as possible)
- Take your feet and knees back to hip width apart
- Push your knees outwards, keeping your feet flat on the floor and hold for a slow count of 5
- Release, then repeat 7 more times



# Thigh Strengthenener

- Sit tall at the front of your chair
- Place the band under the ball of one foot and grasp it with both hands at knee level
- Lift your foot just off the floor then pull your hands to your hips
- Now press your heel away from you until your leg is straight and your heel is just off the floor
- Hold for a slow count of 5 then return to the starting position
- Repeat 6-8 times on each leg

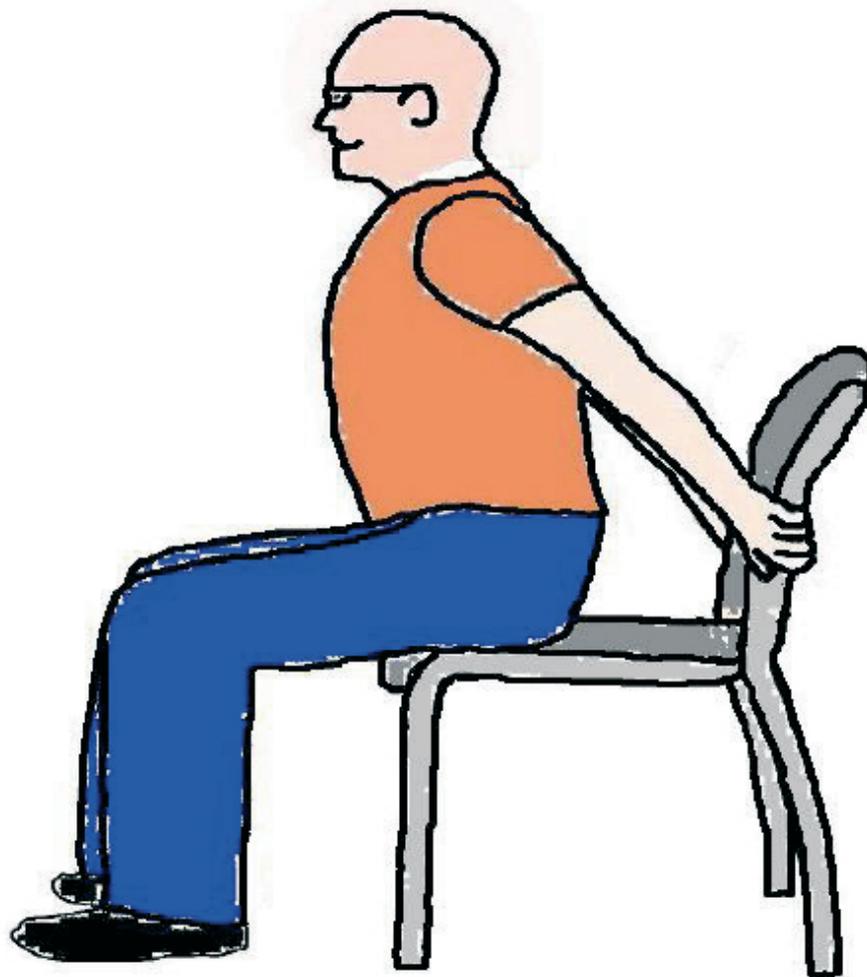


# Ending the session

Finish by **marching** at a relaxed pace for 1-2 minutes then perform all of the following stretches:

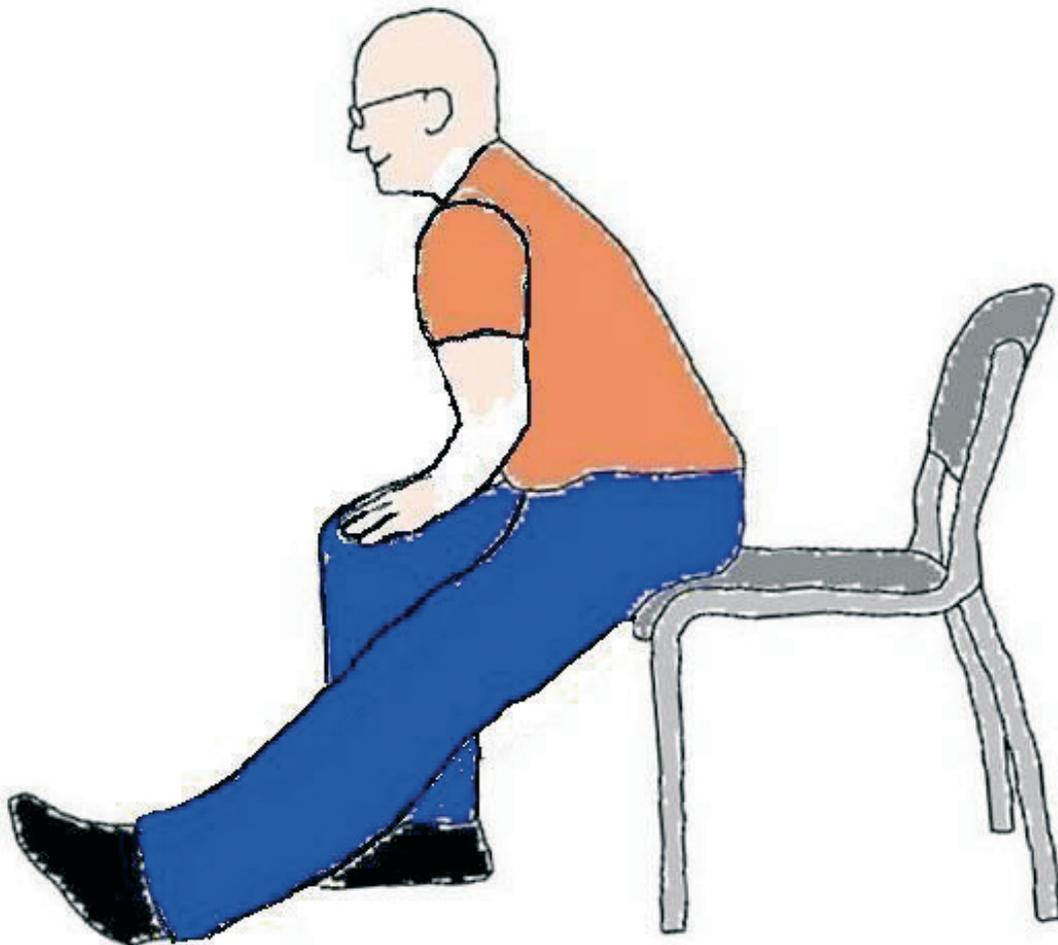
# Chest stretch

- Sit tall away from the back of the chair
- Reach behind with both arms and grasp the chair back
- Press your chest upwards and forwards until you feel the stretch across your chest
- Hold for 10-20 seconds



# Back of thigh stretch

- Make sure you are right at the front of the chair
- Straighten one leg placing the heel on the floor
- Place both hands on the other leg then sit really tall
- Lean forwards with a straight back until you feel the stretch in the back of your thigh
- Hold for 10-20 seconds
- Repeat on the other leg



# Calf stretch

- Stand behind the chair holding on with both hands
- Step back with one leg and press the heel down
- Check that both feet face directly forwards
- Feel the stretch in your calf
- Hold for 10-20 seconds
- Repeat on the other leg



# Finished!

Well done! You have finished your exercises for today.

Try to do these home exercises **one more time** this week. Set a day and a time aside for a second session now.

## **Balance Progression**

Once you are performing the balance exercises with confidence on a regular basis, you should aim to GRADUALLY reduce the amount of hand support you use. This can be done by releasing your little fingers to see if you can still maintain your balance. The next step is to release your ring fingers and when you have mastered this, your middle fingers so that you are now balancing by supporting only with your index fingers. Make sure you master balancing at each stage before progressing to the next.



# Acknowledgements

## **We would like to acknowledge the following content resources:**

The Postural Stability Instructor Manual, Later Life Training, 2008, 2010, 2012.

Skelton DA, Dinan S et al. Tailored group exercise reduces falls in community dwelling older frequent fallers; an RCT, Age and Ageing. 2005, Vol 34, p636-639.

Skelton DA, et al. Bone Mineral Density Improvements Following FaME in Frequently Falling Women Age 65 and Over: An RCT. Journal Aging and Physical Activity 2008; Vol 16: pS89-90.

## **With additional thanks to:**

Steve Richardson, Crashed Inventors, for the “design” of the leaflet.

Professor John Campbell and Dr Clare Robertson for their permission to use the OTAGO Exercise Programme and for their continued collaboration with LLT.

Dr Susie Dinan-Young and Prof Dawn Skelton for their ongoing technical support.

**Later Life Training © 2014**

**This booklet may be reproduced without charge.**