

EMORY

Healthy Aging Study

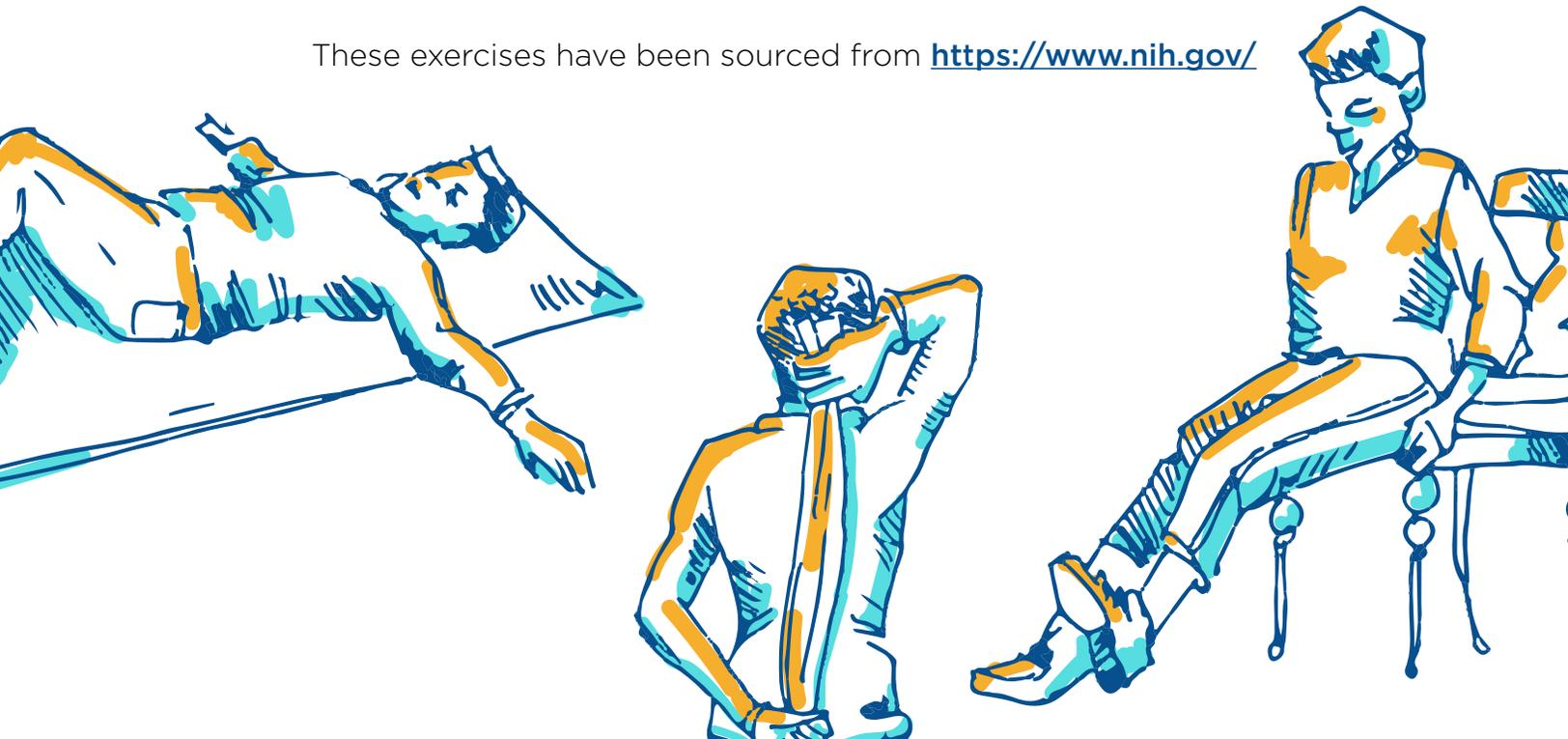
10 STRETCHES

TO DO AS YOU AGE

While stretching at all ages can be beneficial, the benefits of routine stretching become more apparent as we age. We're not saying being able to touch your toes will allow you to run a marathon, but the added flexibility can help improve your movement, blood circulation, and of course make it easier to put your shoes on.

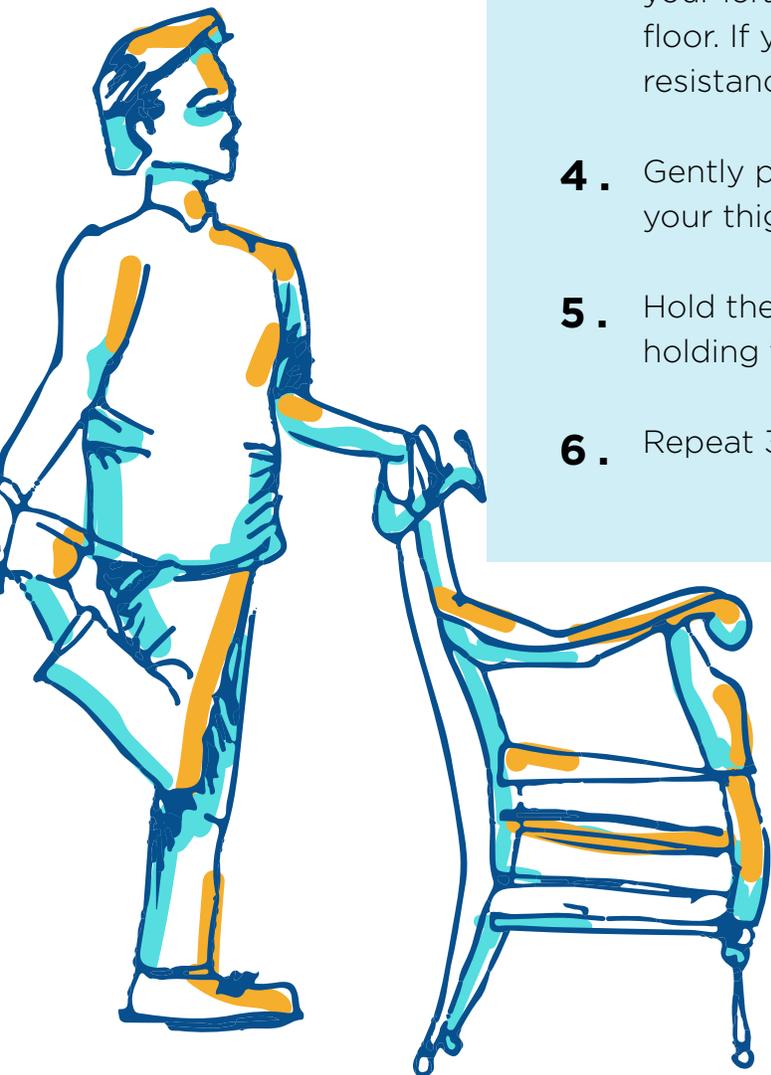
Try using these stretches two times a week. To avoid injury, the NIH recommends always warming up prior to stretching. If you are doing endurance or strength exercises, stretch after, not before. It's important to consult with your physician if you are unsure of a stretch or activity, especially if you've had hip, back, or other surgeries.

These exercises have been sourced from <https://www.nih.gov/>



THIGH STRETCH

- 1.** Standing behind a sturdy chair or handrail, position your feet shoulder-width apart with your knees straight but not locked.
- 2.** Using your right hand, hold the chair or handrail for balance.
- 3.** Bend your left leg back and grasp your foot with your left hand. Your knee should be pointed to the floor. If you can't grab your foot, loop a belt, towel, or resistance band around your foot and hold both ends.
- 4.** Gently pull your leg until you feel a stretch in your thigh.
- 5.** Hold the position for 10-30 seconds. Focus on holding the stretch without bouncing.
- 6.** Repeat 3-5 times on each leg.



CALF STRETCH

- 1.** With feet shoulder-width apart, stand facing a wall slightly farther than arm's reach.
- 2.** Put your palms flat on the wall at shoulder-height and shoulder-width apart.
- 3.** Take one step forward with your right leg and bend at the knee. With both feet flat on the floor, slowly bend your left knee until you feel a stretch in your left knee. If you don't feel a stretch, increase the bend in your right knee until you do. It should not feel uncomfortable.
- 4.** Hold the position for 10-30 seconds. Focus on holding the stretch without bouncing.
- 5.** Return to the starting position and repeat with the left leg.
- 6.** Alternate legs for at least 3-5 times on each leg.



BACK STRETCH

1. Using an armless chair, sit securely towards the front with your feet shoulder-width apart and flat on the floor.
2. Keeping your back straight, slowly bend forward from your hips.
3. Slightly relax your neck and lower your chin. Slowly bend farther forward and slide your hands down your legs toward your shins. Stop when you feel a stretch or slight discomfort. Gently pull your leg until you feel a stretch in your thigh.
4. Hold 10-30 seconds.
5. Straighten up slowly all the way back to the starting position.
6. Repeat at least 3-5 times.



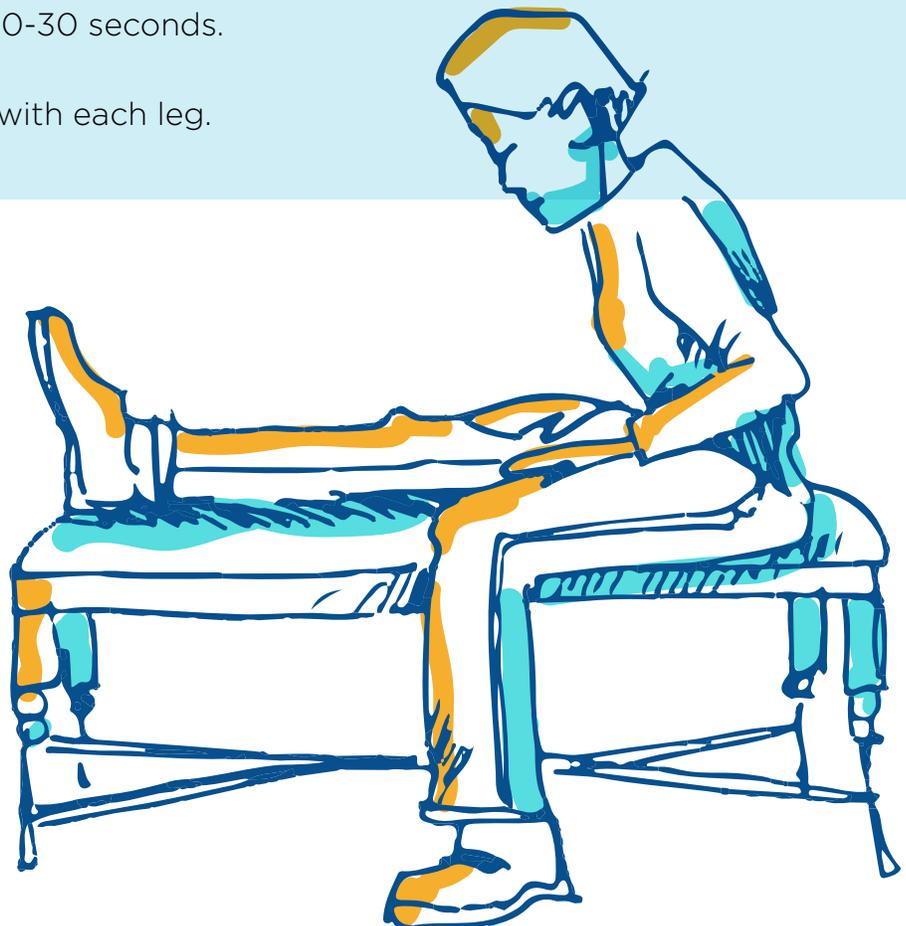
SHOULDER AND UPPER ARM STRETCH



- 1.** Standing with your feet shoulder-width apart, hold one end of a towel in your right hand.
- 2.** Raise your right arm and bend it at the elbow to drape the towel down your back. Hold this position.
- 3.** Use your left hand to reach behind your lower back and grasp the towel.
- 4.** To stretch your right shoulder, pull the towel down with your left hand. Stop when you feel a stretch or slight discomfort in your right shoulder.
- 5.** Repeat 3-5 times.
- 6.** Switch arms and repeat 3-5 times.

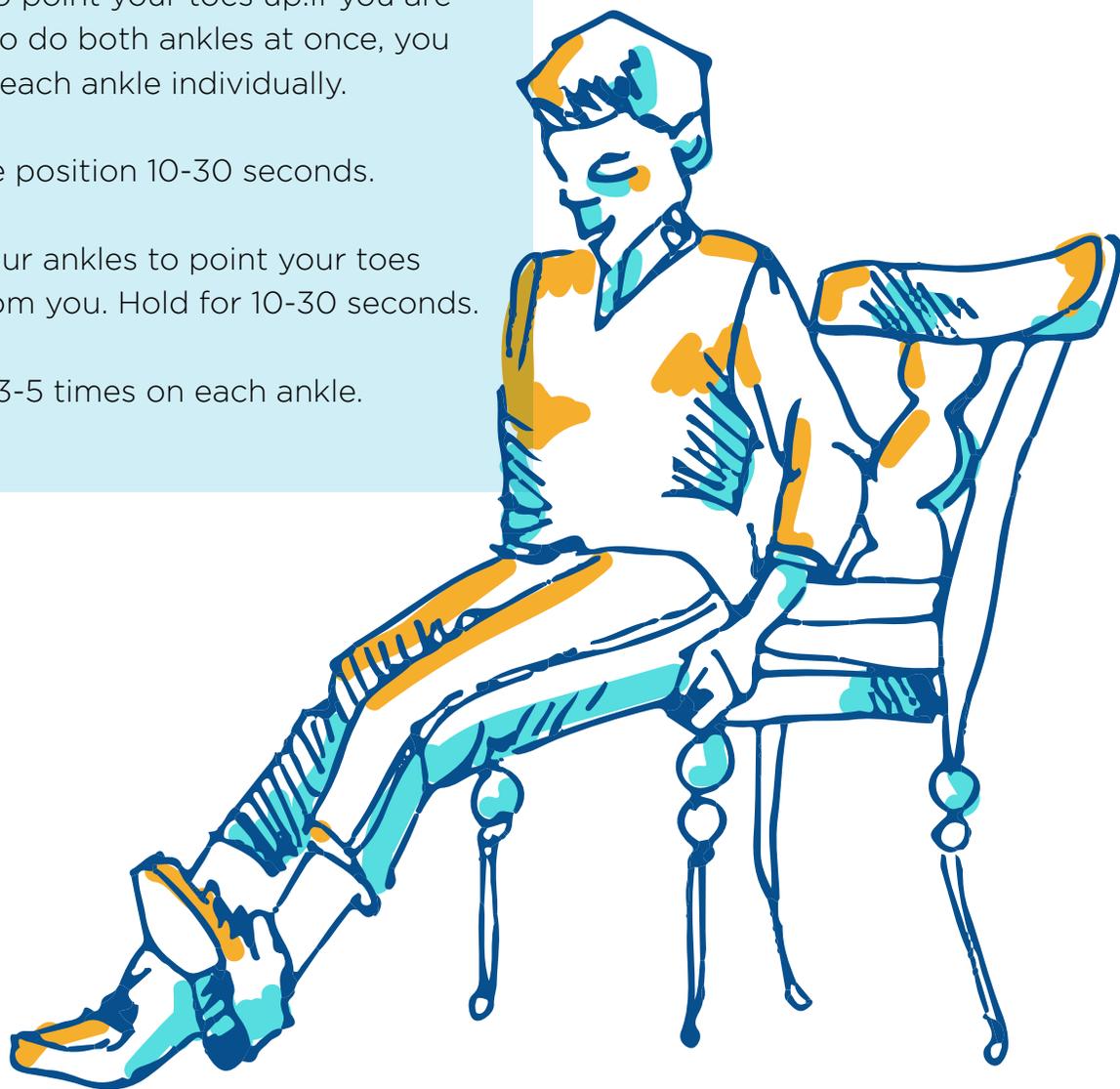
BACK OF LEG STRETCH

1. Using a bench or other hard surface like two chairs put together, sit sideways with your back straight.
2. Stretch one leg out on the bench with your toes pointed up.
3. Keep your other foot flat on the floor.
4. If you feel a stretch at this point, hold position for 10-30 seconds.
5. If you don't feel a stretch, lean forward from hips (not waist) until you feel stretching in the leg on the bench.
6. Hold position for 10-30 seconds.
7. Repeat 3-5 times with each leg.



ANKLE STRETCH

1. Using an armless chair, sit securely toward the edge.
2. Stretch both legs out in front of you.
3. With your heels on the floor, bend your ankles to point your toes up. If you are unable to do both ankles at once, you may do each ankle individually.
4. Hold the position 10-30 seconds.
5. Bend your ankles to point your toes away from you. Hold for 10-30 seconds.
6. Repeat 3-5 times on each ankle.



HIP STRETCH

- 1.** Lie on your back with your legs together, knees bent, and feet flat on the floor. Try to keep both shoulders on the floor throughout the stretch.
- 2.** Keeping your knee bent, slowly lower one leg towards the floor beside you. Try not to move your other leg and keep your feet close together.
- 3.** Hold the position for 10-30 seconds.
- 4.** Slowly raise your knee back up.
- 5.** Repeat 3-5 times on each leg.



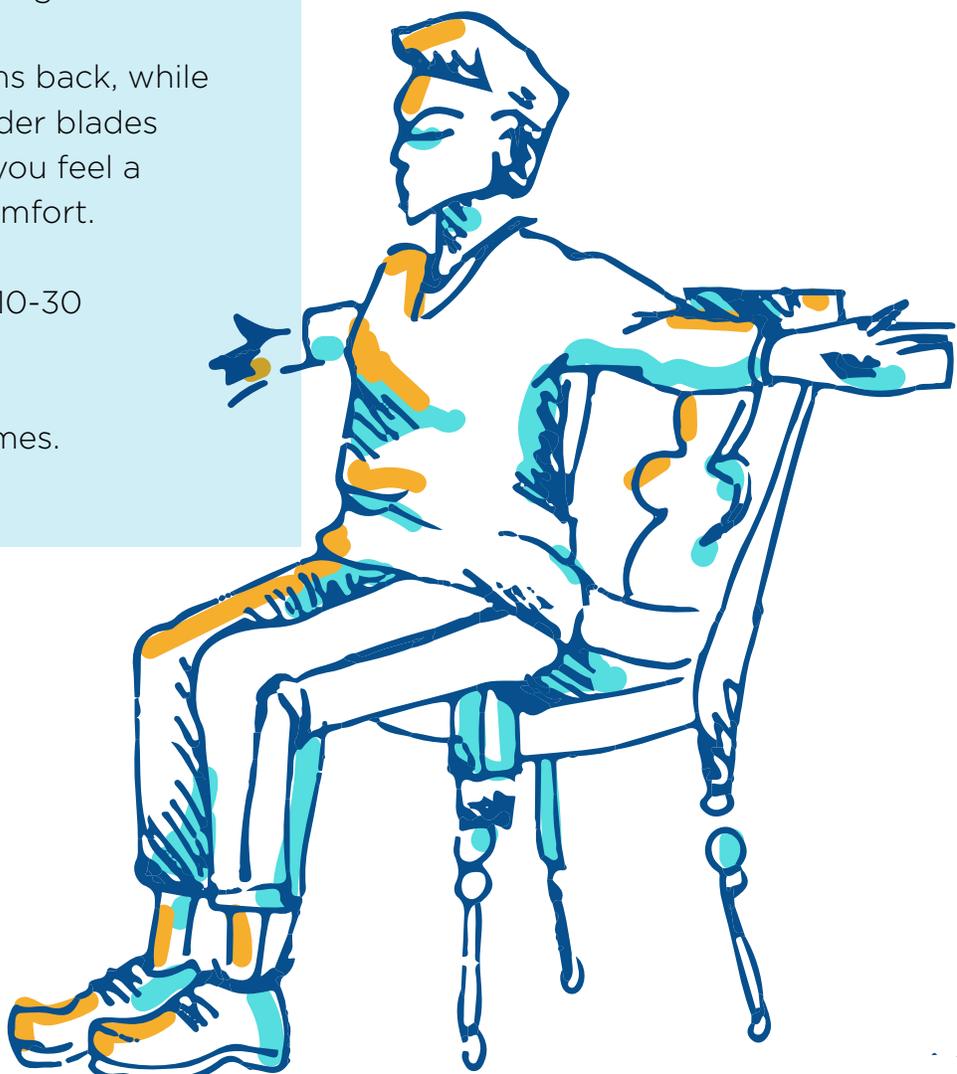


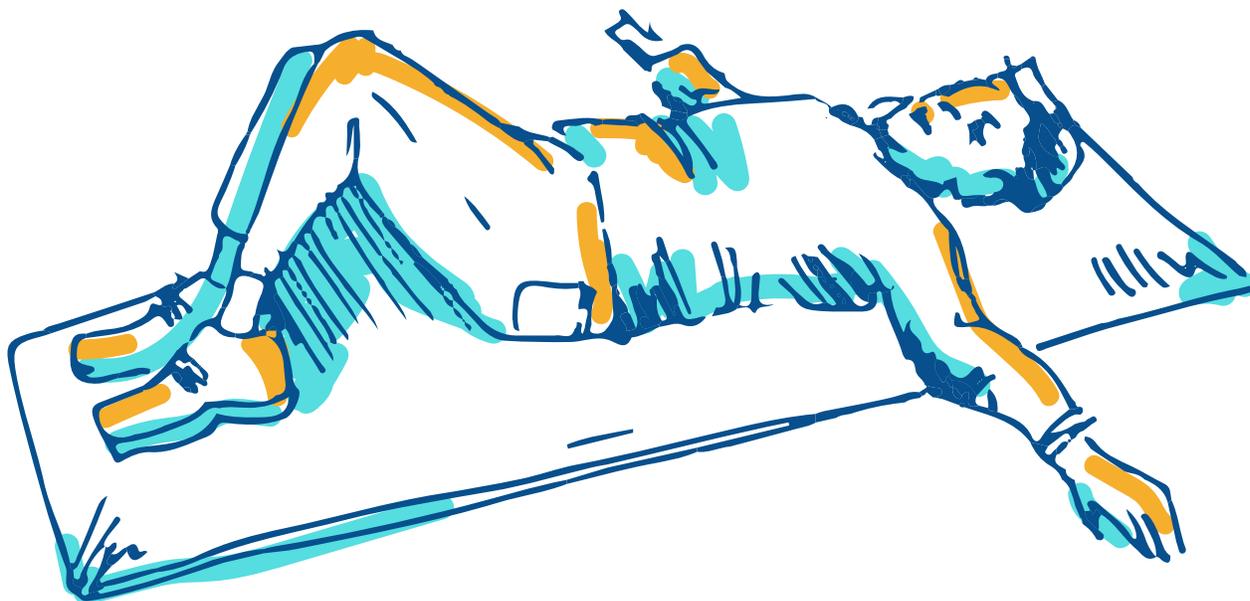
NECK STRETCH

1. This stretch can be done while sitting or standing.
2. Keep your feet shoulder width apart and flat on the floor.
3. Slowly turn your head to the left until you feel a slight stretch. Be careful not to tip or tilt your head forward or backward but hold it in a comfortable position.
4. Hold the position for 10-30 seconds.
5. Turn your head to the right and hold the position for 10-30 seconds.
6. Repeat 3-5 times.

CHEST STRETCH

- 1.** You can do this stretch while standing or sitting in a sturdy, armless chair.
- 2.** Keep your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.
- 3.** Hold arms to your sides at shoulder height, with palms facing forward.
- 4.** Slowly move your arms back, while squeezing your shoulder blades together. Stop when you feel a stretch or slight discomfort.
- 5.** Hold the position for 10-30 seconds.
- 6.** Repeat at least 3-5 times.





LOWER BACK STRETCH

- 1.** Lie on your back with your legs together, knees bent, and feet flat on the floor. Try to keep both arms and shoulders flat on the floor throughout the stretch.
- 2.** Keeping knees bent and together, slowly lower both legs to one side as far as you comfortably can.
- 3.** Hold position for 10-30 seconds.
- 4.** Bring legs back up slowly and repeat toward other side.
- 5.** Continue alternating sides for at least 3-5 times on each side.