



***SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS***  
Affiliated with National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A., Associated  
Country Women of the World and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service  
SCFCL website: <http://www.scfcl.com>

## **Leader Training Guide**

### **Title: Chair Exercises for Seniors**

**Objectives:** To enhance our ability to be mobile longer and to strengthen muscles and ligaments to avoid falls. To expand our breathing capacity and to develop better motor skills.

**Lesson Overview/Introduction:** Stay Active - you will feel better. Regular exercise can boost energy, maintain independence, and manage symptoms of illness or pain. Not only is exercise good for your body, it is also good for your mind, mood and memory. This exercise program is done while sitting in a chair. The lesson covers the body from head to toe with "range of motion" exercises to help keep the body more flexible as we strengthen our muscles and improve our breathing. There are 18 steps for you to cover at least three times a week for the best results.

**Lesson:** All exercises are done while sitting in a chair.

**BEFORE STARTING THESE EXERCISES OR ANY OTHER EXERCISES, CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN.**

For a better workout, drink more water. Going for a work out? GREAT!! Just be sure to protect against dehydration by drinking water before you work out and after workout. Experts recommend drinking 4 to 8 oz. water before, during and after a workout.

Age, body weight and certain medications also influence hydration. Aging desensitizes the thirst mechanism, which means you'll drink less. Excess weight makes your body work harder and sweat more. Certain medications, including diuretics, antihistamines and blood pressure drugs, can cause fluid loss.

1. **Neck Stretch:** Press your chin into your chest tightly, then raise your chin up as high as you can. Inhale as you count to 10 and then release the air as you SLOWLY bring your chin back down. Repeat 7 times.
2. **Neck Roll:** Rotate your head in a complete circle SLOWLY. Start by looking straight down at the floor, then rotate your head to the right as you look over the right shoulder, then rotate to look straight up at the ceiling, then over the left shoulder and back down to the floor. Repeat 7 times.
3. **Bend Your Head:** Lean as far as you can to the right, trying to touch your right ear to your shoulder. Inhale, hold your breath while you count to 10, then release the breath as you return your head to straight up. Repeat 7 times. Then do the same exercise leaning your head to the left shoulder. Repeat 7 times.
4. **Shrug:** Raise both shoulders, rotating your shoulder joint forward and to the back, until your shoulders touch your ears. Hold this position for the count of 10, while you inhale (through your

nose), blow the air out of your mouth as you lower your shoulders while rotating your shoulder joint backward. Repeat 7 times.

5. Arm Slide: Cross your arms over your chest, alternating your arms (right arm on top, then the left one on top), giving yourself a hug. Then bring your arms down and separate your hands and keep moving until your elbows touch the back of your chair. Repeat 7 times.

6. Row Your Boat: Place all of the fingers on your right hand on your shoulder, then use your elbow like a pencil to draw a SLOW, ROUND circle in the air. Repeat 7 times. Do the same exercise again using the left fingers on the left shoulder. Repeat 7 times.

7. Wrist Rotation: Extend your arms out in front of you. Do not move your arms - only your hands from the wrist. Stretch the fingers of both hands apart as far as you can, then close the fingers into a fist and bend the fist back to your under wrist as far as you can. Repeat 7 times.

8. Waist Exercise: Sit up straight in your chair. Place both hands on your hips. SLOWLY lean forward, looking at the floor. Then rotate your body to the right, to the back, and then the left and return to the front. Repeat 7 times, then repeat the exercise 7 times while rotating to the left.

9. Arm Stretch: Lower your hands straight down towards the floor, then SLOWLY raise them up as high as you can over your head. Inhale through your nose and hold it through the count of 10. Then, SLOWLY lower your hands back toward the floor as you slowly blow the breath out of your mouth. Repeat 7 times.

10. Arch Your Arms: Sitting straight up in your chair, stretch your right arm straight out at your side, then SLOWLY raise it over your head until your fingers point toward the floor. Inhale as you raise your arm and exhale as you return the arm until it is pointing straight out to the side. Repeat 10 times. Repeat 7 times with the left arm.

11. Quad Set: Sitting straight up in your chair, dig your heels into the floor and pull them back toward you, tightening the muscles of your calves, knees and thighs. Hold for the count of 10, relax your muscles. Repeat 7 times.

12. Quad Set: Sitting straight up in your chair, dig your heels into the floor and pull them back toward you, tightening the muscles of your calves, knees and thighs. Raise both legs about three inches from the floor. Keep your legs stretched as straight as you can. Hold for count of 10. Relax and let your feet back down on the floor. Repeat 7 times.

13. Quad Set: Sitting straight up in your chair, dig your heels into the floor and pull them back toward you, tightening the muscles of your calves, knees and thighs. Raise both legs as high as you can off the floor, and lean forward towards your feet. You will have a stretching sensation in the backs of your knees. Hold this position for the count of 10. Relax and let your feet back down to the floor. Repeat 7 times.

14. **Hip Flex:** Sitting up straight in your chair, raise one knee up as high as you can, and bring your foot back to touch the leg of your chair. Hold that position for the count of 10. Relax and bring your foot back down to the floor. Repeat 7 times.
15. **Foot Rotation:** Stretch your legs out in front of you and hold them straight. Rotate your feet (only the feet from the ankles, do not move the legs). You will be drawing a circle in the air. Rotate to the right SLOWLY 13 times then change and rotate to the left for 12 more circles. Total of 25. Repeat 7 times.
16. **Achilles Flex:** Sitting in your chair, stretch your legs out as far as you can, keeping your toes pointed. Count to 10 and relax, letting your feet drop to the floor. Repeat 7 times.
17. **Breathing:** Inhale through your nose while counting (silently) to 7. Hold your breath for the count of 7. Blow the air back out through your mouth while counting (silently) to 7. Rest for a couple of seconds and then repeat this 7 times.
18. **Brain Teaser:** If doing this exercise routine for a group, always have something that they can think about and answer. Example: Name a Flower or food that starts with a letter of the alphabet - A to Z.

**Lesson Summary:** Do these exercises at least three times each week. They will improve your overall feelings as well as strengthen the muscles in your ankles and knees and help keep your joints moving and active. Helps to keep your body limber and increase your range of movement.

**Suggested Activities:** Do these exercises with your FCL group, your ladies (or men's) church group, at the Federation of the Blind meetings, or visit the local home for Seniors (that does not usually have a person who does exercises for them) and supervise the class several times each week. Do them at home with your family.

**Suggested Materials:** A short quiz for the Brain Teaser. A sturdy chair for each person.

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**Sources/References:**

- 1) helpguide.org (senior fitness); U.S. Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Aging.
- 2) [www.arthritistoday.org](http://www.arthritistoday.org)
- 3) Arthritis Foundation