

Sitting Exercise

Department: Mobility and Fitness

Priority: High

Overall purpose of class: A motivating enjoyable group experience that assists students in warming up muscles and joints in preparation for more strenuous exercises. This class is directed toward increasing strength and flexibility throughout the entire body while remaining in a seated position. Emphasis is on improvement of the following:

- Core alignment
- Posture
- Flexibility
- Motor Sequencing
- Two and four limb patterning
- Endurance
- Coordination

Number of classes held per week: 4

Optimum class time: This is an ideal warm up class so it should be offered and taken in the morning

Instructor requirements: 1 PT or PT aide or teacher's assistant under PT supervision

Number of students: Up to 26—room size is primary limitation

Student ability range and limitations: Wide range of student levels can be accommodated. The only major limiting factor is pain.

Space and Equipment requirements: Room should be 30 feet square or more. Equipment can be minimal. Music, dowels, canes, ribbon flags, drums and other student instruments are optional.

Student Needs to be met from the perspective of the instructor: Exercises in this class address improvement in performance of activities of daily living. Instructor should always stress the benefits in daily life of each movement offered. Reaching, diagonal movements and twists are required in bathing, dressing, cooking, cleaning, turning equipment on and off, etc.

Typical Student Goals that lead to placement in the class: Students whose goals include improving use of arms, shoulders, one arm and/or one leg often enjoy and benefit from this class.

Suggested Lessons and Activities: This class requires lots of repetition for strength and endurance so activities need to be varied and fun to keep motivation high. Stressing benefits in ADLs is vital. Homework is invaluable. Variations of the following activities are presented in class and handouts should be provided to encourage out of class practice.

Sitting Exercise Class Sample Exercises

GENERAL: Sit erect in the chair, toward the edge of your seat, feet flat on the floor. Some people may need a pillow behind their back to keep them from slouching back in the seat.

WARM UPS: Keep hands clasped throughout the next four exercises:

1. **FORWARD STRETCH:** With hands clasped together and arms stretched straight out in front, lean forward from the hip keeping the head up as much as possible. Return, bringing hands toward the stomach, rocking back on the hips and tucking the stomach in. Repeat this sequence 5x.
2. **DIAGONAL STRETCH:** With the hands still clasped together bring them up to the Right shoulder and then move diagonally down to the outside of the Left knee. Return hands to the Right shoulder and begin the sequence again. Repeat 5x. Do other side beginning on Left shoulder and moving to Right knee.
3. **UP AND DOWN STRETCH:** With hands clasped, reach arms up toward the ceiling and then down toward the floor, going in between the feet and reaching toward the back of the chair if possible. Repeat this sequence 5x.

HEAD AND NECK EXERCISES:

1. **HEAD RETRACTION:** Start exercise looking straight ahead. Move head slowly backward until it is pulled back as far as you can. Keep chin tucked in and down (remain looking straight ahead.) Return to starting position.
2. **NECK EXTENSION:** With head in retraction (as in exercise #1), left chin and tilt head backward as in looking up to the ceiling. Do not allow neck to move forward as you do this. Return to center. Repeat 3x.
3. **NECK FLEXION:** Drop your head forward with chin as close as possible to the chest. Return to center. Repeat 3x.
4. **RIGHT TO LEFT ROTATION:** With head in retraction, keep shoulders facing forward, rotate head gently from Right to the Left, the head remaining level as if moving on a shelf. Repeat 3x.
5. **SIDEWARD STRETCH:** With head in retraction, keep shoulders relaxed and the head facing forward. Bend the Left ear toward the Left shoulder. This stretches the side of the neck. To add more stretch to this you may ask the students to put their right hand down at their side and imagine carrying a heavy suitcase or pushing the hand toward the floor. Return to center and repeat sequence 3x. Do other side.

SHOULDER EXERCISES

1. **SHOULDER SHRUGS:** Shrug shoulders up toward the ears, squeeze, and relax down to beginning. Repeat 3x.
2. **SHOULDER BACK SQUEEZE:** Squeeze shoulders back and downward as far as possible. Relax to beginning. Repeat 3x.
3. **SHOULDER CIRCLES:** Make a circular motion with both shoulders, bringing them forward, up, back, and down. Repeat 3x. You may also want sometimes to do each shoulder individually.

ARM AND SHOULDER EXERCISES

1. **ARM CIRCLES (BIG):** Lift Right arm forward and up, continue bringing arm to the back, making a full circle. It is good to follow your hand with your eyes, thereby continuing the stretch into the neck area. You may also ask the students to inhale as their arm comes up and exhale as the arm returns downward. Repeat 5x. Do other side.
2. **ARM CIRCLES (SMALL WITH BOTH ARMS):** Lift arms straight out to the side. Make small circles in one direction 5x and then reverse the direction and repeat 5x.
3. **ARM CIRCLES (BIG WITH BOTH ARMS):** Lift both arms straight forward, then up to ceiling and open out to the sides. This is especially good for opening up the chest area which is normally quite constricted. This exercise is also enhanced when performed with breath work, inhaling as the arms rise to the ceiling and exhaling as the arms come down to the side.
4. **REACH TO THE CEILING:** Lift both arms up toward the ceiling. Now reach upward, alternating Left and then Right. This stretches the muscles along the sides of the body. Repeat 5x.
5. **FUN ALTERNATIVE TO ARM CIRCLES AND SHOULDER EXERCISES:** Do the various swimming strokes such as the crawl, back stroke and the breaststroke.
6. **ELBOW CIRCLES:** Place hands on shoulders, elbows out to the sides. Make circles with the elbows 5x in each direction.
7. **UPPER CHEST AND SHOULDER STRETCH:** Clasp hands behind the head and bring bent elbows back, again stretching the chest area. Relax, bringing the elbows forward toward each other. Repeat 3x.
8. **ARM PIT STRETCH:** Lift Right arm up toward the ceiling, now bend at the elbow and bring the Right hand down to the back of the neck. Remain here feeling the stretch.
Return to center and repeat the exercise with the Left arm.
TOP OF THE SHOULDER STRETCH: Place the back of the Right hand around and on the back at waist level. Hold and return to center. Repeat this with the left side.

EXERCISES FOR THE TORSO

1. **TORSO CIRCLES:** Hands clasped together on lap. Bend the torso to the Left, backward, to the Right, then slightly forward. Repeat 3x in each direction.
2. **CHEST LIFT:** Sit erect: Hands on lap. Lift the breastbone area up toward the ceiling and then relax. Repeat 3x. Really feel the lift from this area. You may want to ask the students to really slouch so they can feel the contrast between the two positions. Opening the diaphragm area by lifting the chest facilitates breathing.

3. SIDE STRETCH: Sit erect. Right arm down at the side. Lift the Left arm up toward the Left ear, reaching up and over, feeling a nice stretch along the side. Repeat 3x and do other side. This exercise is also nice with the breath, inhaling as the arm comes up and exhaling on the downward motion.
4. SIDE TWIST: Place the Right hand on the Left shoulder. Now place the Left hand under the Right elbow. Push yourself around toward the Left, twisting and looking as far behind you as possible. Return to center. Repeat this 3x and do other side, placing the Left hand on the Right shoulder, etc. To add more stretch to this ask the students to cross the opposite leg over lap, i.e., when the Right hand is on the Left shoulder, cross the Left leg over the Right leg.
5. ELBOW TO OPPOSITE KNEE: Place hands behind the neck. Touch the Right elbow to the Left knee and return to starting. Repeat 3x and do other side.

LEG EXERCISES

1. HIP JOINT WARM UP: Clasp hands around Right knee and pull up toward the chest. Keeping hands clasped around the knee, relax. Pull up again 3x. It is nice to inhale as you pull up the knee and exhale as the knee relaxes.
2. MARCH IN PLACE: Take 20-30 steps in place, lifting the knees high as if marching. You may want to slightly increase the speed toward the end.
3. BENT LEG LIFTS: Raise the Right knee up, straighten the leg forward, bend the knee again and place the foot down. Repeat this 5x and do other side.
4. BENT LEG LIFT AND SWING OUT TO THE SIDE: Raise the Right knee up, swing the leg out to the Right side, return to center, and place the foot down. Repeat 5x and do other side.
5. STRAIGHT LEG LIFT: Straighten Right leg out in front, lift straight up to hip level (if possible), and then lower to floor. Repeat 5x and do other leg.
6. HAMSTRING STRETCH: Straighten Right leg out in front. Keep the Left leg bent with foot flat on floor. Place the Left hand on the Left thigh for balance. Slide the Right hand down the Right leg, trying to keep the Right leg straight during the entire exercise. Repeat this stretch on the Right side 3-5x. Do other side. You may again use breath work, inhaling first and then sliding down the leg on the exhale.
7. HIP JOINT FLEXIBILITY: Place the heel of your Right foot on the Left knee, using your hands if needed. Rest in this position and then return the Right foot down. Repeat 3x. Do the Left side.

FOOT EXERCISES

DO ALL OF THE FOLLOWING EXERCISES WITH ONE FOOT BEFORE SWITCHING TO THE OTHER SIDE.

CROSS THE RIGHT LEG OVER LEFT KNEE.

1. FOOT CIRCLES: Make circles with the foot in one direction 10x and then reverse the direction and repeat 10x.
2. FLEX AND EXTEND FOOT: Point the foot (extend) and flex the foot back. Repeat 10x.
3. DRAWING NUMBERS: Draw the numbers 1-5 with the foot.

CROSS THE LEFT LEG OVER AND REPEAT THESE EXERCISES.

HAND EXERCISES

1. WRIST CIRCLES: Make circles with both wrists 5x in each direction.
2. PALMS DOWN, OPENING AND CLOSING HANDS: Palms facing down, reach arms straight out in front, open the hands and fingers wide, then bring the hands back toward the stomach while making a fist. Repeat this sequence 3x. On the last outward reach, maintain this position and open and close the hands a little faster 5-10x. Shake hands out.
3. PALMS UP, OPENING AND CLOSING HANDS: Same as #2 but with the palms facing up.
4. PALMS FACING EACH OTHER, OPENING AND CLOSING HANDS: Same as #2 but with the palms facing each other.
5. FINGER EXERCISES: Hold palms up facing the mirror. Touch the thumb to each finger, making as big a circle as possible. Pretend you are picking up a sesame seed and then flick it away. Repeat all fingers 5x. Shake out the hands.

CLOSURE

Have the students close their eyes and take three nice deep breaths ... one for the mind, one for the body, and one for the spirit. Inhale deep through the nose and exhale through the mouth. It is nice to encourage students to breathe as deeply and slowly as they can and perhaps give a sigh upon each exhalation.