



10 STANDING EXERCISES TO BUILD STRENGTH

Here are 10 exercises you can do in a standing position throughout the day, along with a suggestion for which household activity you can pair it with!



Start with 10–15 repetitions of these every day. All 10 exercises should take less than 10 minutes.

Tips:

Do these at intervals throughout the day.

If you follow this in order, you will have completed a full body workout – moving up from your feet to your shoulders and incorporating most muscle groups on the way.

After about 6–8 weeks, start to combine a few elements of the exercises to work multiple joints.

For example, combine the hip extension with the knee raise and you have added a balance element to your workout. Pair the leg curls with an opposite arm curl to reach for a full body movement, or the lunge and shoulder shrugs for another combination.

If you have any concerns or questions about your health before undergoing this activity, please consult with a physician or health-care professional first.

Calf raises

Try these while waiting for the kettle to boil.

- Holding onto a bench or counter, lift your heels off the ground as high as you can.
- Drop the heels back down to the floor – that is one repetition.
- To make it more challenging, place your toes on the edge of a step and drop the heels lower than your toes.

Leg curls

Try these while you're doing the dishes.

- Standing up tall, simply lift the heel of one foot up toward your bottom. Don't go too high to begin with, as this can often cause a cramp.
- As you feel more comfortable with your hamstring flexibility, you can increase the range of movement.
- Return the foot to the floor, transfer your weight to that leg as you lift the opposite heel toward your bottom and repeat.

Knee raises

Try these before climbing or cleaning the stairs.

- Standing up tall, transfer your weight onto one foot and lift the other knee up toward your chest.
- Hold for a couple of seconds, then return the foot to the floor.
- Transfer your weight to the other foot and then lift the opposite knee.
- To make it more challenging, hold the knee up for longer – this will also improve your balance.

Hip extension

Try this during TV ads!

- Hold on to a chair and slide one foot along the ground behind you.
- As your foot lifts off the floor make sure that there is absolutely no bend in the knee at all – the leg has to be absolutely straight for the gluteus maximus to be activated.
- Return the foot to the floor and repeat.
- Ensure that you are not compensating by leaning forward.
- Strengthening your glutes will assist you when engaging in everyday activities.

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Hip abduction

Try this during a LONG ad break.

- This exercise works the gluteus medius and the gluteus minimus.
- Swing the leg out to the side, return and then do the same on the other leg.
- Continue to alternate.
- It is very important here not to force the range of movement as the hip will only go as far as the hip socket and thigh bone will allow – and this is different for everyone so take it easy.

Side bends

Try these first thing in the morning after getting out of bed, or during ironing breaks.

- Simply lean directly to one side until your fingertips reach about the top side of the knee cap.
- Then return to the starting position and repeat on the other side.
- This works the internal and external oblique muscles.

Good mornings

Try these before you are about to do something with more intensity – like gardening or carrying a load of washing.

- Standing upright with your hands resting lightly behind your head, bend forward keeping your back flat.
- Bend your knees slightly if you need to, but ideally keep your hamstrings straight.
- The hips should be in a hip hinge, as if you are going to sit in a chair with the knees over the heels, not the toes.

Shoulder shrugs

Try these when you have been sitting at a desk or computer for a long period of time.

- We carry a lot of tension in our shoulders and this exercise will help them to relax as well as strengthen your upper back muscles.
- Simply lift both your shoulders straight up toward your ears and squeeze for a couple of seconds.
- Now relax and repeat.

Static lunges

Try these before work or any activity that involves walking (like heading to the shops).

- Take a step forward with one of your legs. There should be a good distance between your feet.
- Keeping the front knee over the heel of the front foot, bend the back knee and let the back knee drop slowly toward the floor.
- Just before it reaches the floor push down through the heel of the front foot and return to the starting position. Make sure the knee stays back and the shins are almost vertical.
- The lunge is an up and down movement so minimise any forward movement.
- If you feel unbalanced, make sure your feet are not in line – if they are, move one foot to the side more.

Hammer curl to reach

Try these before starting a recipe in the kitchen.

- Start with two cans from your pantry. Hold the cans by your side, with your elbows fixed to your side.
- Lift your hands straight up to your shoulders without twisting the forearms – this is a hammer curl.
- The cans should now be over your shoulders. Then, press the cans up and above your shoulders. Keep the elbows fully extended but not locked.
- Then bend the elbows and return the weight to above the shoulders and flex the elbows down to your side to return to your starting position.