

Band Exercises for Older Adults: Using Resistance to Build Strength and Prevent Falls



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No matter what your abilities are today, you can improve your strength and balance.

Included in this booklet is a selection of basic band exercises to get you started! Many of the exercises have additional variations. Perform 1-3 sets of 10-15 repetitions for each exercise. Consider a more challenging band tension once you can complete 3 sets of 15 repetitions.



Band Exercises for Older Adults

Injury Prevention Centre • 2022

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Build Strength With Bands.....	4
How to Exercise with a Band	5
Before You Exercise.....	6
As You Exercise	7
1. Seated Hip Abduction.....	8
2. Seated Marching Hip Flexion	10
3. Seated Toe and Heel Raises	12
4. Seated Knee Extension.....	14
5. Seated Shovel Exercise.....	16
6. Seated Shoulder Flexion	18
7. Seated Bicep Curls.....	20
8. Seated Row	22
9. Seated Shoulder External Rotation (band pull apart).....	24
Cool Down Your Body.....	26
Disclaimer	27

Build Strength With Bands

Exercising with resistance bands is a great way to build strength in all parts of your body - legs, arms, and core. Bands are portable and inexpensive. You can use them at home, outdoors, or at the gym.

Building strength with bands is safe and effective and will:

- Reduce your risk for falls
- Improve your physical capabilities
- Deter some chronic diseases.

Generally, increasing your strength will lessen the symptoms of aging. (Seguin et al. 2003)

Almost anyone can exercise with bands.

If you:

- have talked with your healthcare provider about exercising
- have been regularly doing some exercises and/or activities
- have enough strength in your hands to hold a band securely,

then you are ready to exercise with bands.

Be Active

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Adults aged 65 years and older should accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity per week in bouts of 10 minutes or more. Plus, it is beneficial to add muscle and bone strengthening activities, like exercising with bands, at least 2 days per week.

How to Exercise with a Band

For these exercises you will need:

- A sturdy chair without arms, like a kitchen chair
- Shoes that are flat and supportive
- Clothing that allows you to move freely
- A band

Bands come in various colours representing different amounts of tension or resistance.

Tension can also be increased by moving your hands closer together to shorten the length of the band.



Bands are also called:

- Resistance bands
- Exercise bands
- Therapy bands
- Tubing
- Circular/Loop bands



Before You Exercise

Warm up your body

- Do 5-10 minutes of light to moderate aerobic activity:
 - Walk briskly, dance, bike, or row
- Move your muscles:
 - Rise up on your toes then your heels
 - Squat half way down or sit to stand
 - Do arm circles and wall push-ups

When you feel warm and alert and you are perspiring lightly, you are ready to go.

Select the right band

- Choose a band that you can move through the entire range
- Change where you grip the band to adjust the tension
- Begin exercising with lighter tension, increasing resistance as you progress over time

Review the exercises

- Read through the instructions and look at the pictures
- Practice each movement without the band



As You Exercise

- Maintain good posture:
 - Sit up tall, tighten your core, relax your shoulders
- Grip band firmly, but don't cause white knuckles
- Make slow, controlled movements:
 - Don't allow band to snap back
- Count your repetitions out loud
- Continue breathing throughout:
 - Don't hold your breath
 - Exhale as you pull on the band
- Always keep a slight bend in your knees and elbows

- Consider a lighter band if any of the movements are too hard to do

An Important Reminder:

Always listen to your body!

Stop exercising if:

- A movement causes pain
- You become dizzy
- You feel not right or "off"



To tighten or engage your core, imagine pulling your belly button towards your spine.

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Keep hydrated as you exercise.



1. Seated Hip Abduction

Set up and starting position:

- Sit on a chair with feet flat on the floor and shoulder width apart
- Tie band around thighs, just above the knee
- Relax shoulders, tighten core and maintain good posture



1. Seated Hip Abduction

Movement:

- Push thighs out against band to open, hold for 3-5 seconds
- Slowly return to start position
- Relax, repeat up to 15 times
- Count your repetitions out loud



2. Seated Marching Hip Flexion

Set up and starting position:

- Sit up straight in a chair with feet flat on the floor, shoulder width apart
- Tie band around the thighs, just above the knee
- Relax shoulders, tighten core and maintain good posture



2. Seated Marching Hip Flexion

Movement:

- Raise one knee up towards chest to stretch band
- Hold for 5 seconds and slowly lower back to floor
- Repeat up to 15 times on each leg
- Count your repetitions out loud



3. Seated Toe and Heel Raises

Set up and starting position:

- Sit up straight in a chair with feet flat on the floor, shoulder width apart
- Tie band around the thighs, just above the knee
- Relax shoulders, tighten core and maintain good posture



3. Seated Toe and Heel Raises

Movement:

- Press sides of thighs out into band and raise both toes off the floor
- Don't let band pull your knees or ankles inward
- Hold for 5 seconds then return to start position
- Raise both heels off the floor
- Repeat up to 15 times
- Count your repetitions out loud



4. Seated Knee Extension

Set up and starting position:

- Sit on a chair with feet flat on the floor, shoulder width apart
- Tie band around ankles, just above the shoes
- Relax shoulders, tighten core and maintain good posture



4. Seated Knee Extension

Movement:

- Keep left knee bent with foot on floor, slowly straighten right leg to stretch elastic
- Hold leg extended for 5 seconds, slowly return to start position
- Repeat up to 15 times on each leg
- Count your repetitions out loud



5. Seated Shovel Exercise

Set up and starting position:

- Sit on a chair with feet flat on the floor, shoulder width apart
- Loop band around bottom of one foot
- Relax shoulders, tighten core and maintain good posture



5. Seated Shovel Exercise

Movement:

- Hold ends of band firmly in both hands and keep them at hip height
- Slowly bend knee towards chest, keeping toes pointed up
- Push foot down towards the floor to straighten knee.
- Repeat up to 15 times on each leg
- Count your repetitions out loud



6. Seated Shoulder Flexion

Set up and starting position:

- Sit on a chair with feet flat on the floor and shoulder width apart
- Loop band under thighs, hold band firmly in both hands
- Relax shoulders, tighten core to maintain good posture



6. Seated Shoulder Flexion

Movement:

- Hold left hand stationary on thigh
- Hold right arm straight with thumb up and pull the band up in front of you as high as comfortable
- Hold band up for 5 seconds
- Slowly return to the starting position
- Repeat up to 15 times on each arm
- Count your repetitions out loud



7. Seated Bicep Curls

Set up and starting position:

- Sit up straight in a chair with feet flat on the floor
- Loop band under feet and hold band firmly in both hands
- Relax shoulders, tighten core to maintain good posture



7. Seated Bicep Curls

Movement:

- Hold each end of the band with thumbs facing up
- Keep elbows at your sides
- Keep wrists straight, bend right elbow bringing hand toward right shoulder
- Only one forearm should move at a time
- Slowly lower hand and repeat up to 15 times on each arm
- Count your repetitions out loud



8. Seated Row

Set up and starting position:

- Sit up straight in a chair with feet flat on the floor, back straight
- Loop band under one foot and hold band firmly in both hands
- Relax shoulders, tighten core and maintain good posture



Movement:

- Squeeze shoulder blades together while bringing elbows straight back until hands reach top of hips
- Hold for 5 seconds then slowly return to start position
- Keep arms close to your side the entire time
- Repeat up to 15 times
- Count your repetitions out loud



9. Seated Shoulder External Rotation (band pull apart)

Set up and starting position:

- Sit up straight in a chair with feet flat on the floor
- Hold band firmly shoulder width apart in both hands, elbows bent at your side with thumbs facing up
- Relax shoulders, tighten core and maintain good posture



9. Seated Shoulder External Rotation (band pull apart)

Movement:

- Keep elbows in, stretch band apart and hold for 5 seconds
- Slowly bring hands back to start
- Repeat up to 15 times
- Count your repetitions out loud



Cool Down Your Body

Use this time to cool your mind and body:

- Start your cool down with 2-3 minutes of either walking around the room or walking on the spot
- Perform the same exercises you did during warm-up

- Add stretching to your cool-down

Always cool-down after exercise and before you sit down or stand still for lengths of time.

Important to:

- Move slower
- Lower heart rate
- Breathe deeper





Explore options for activities in your community. Visit your local seniors centre or recreation centre to learn about programs and classes for you!

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