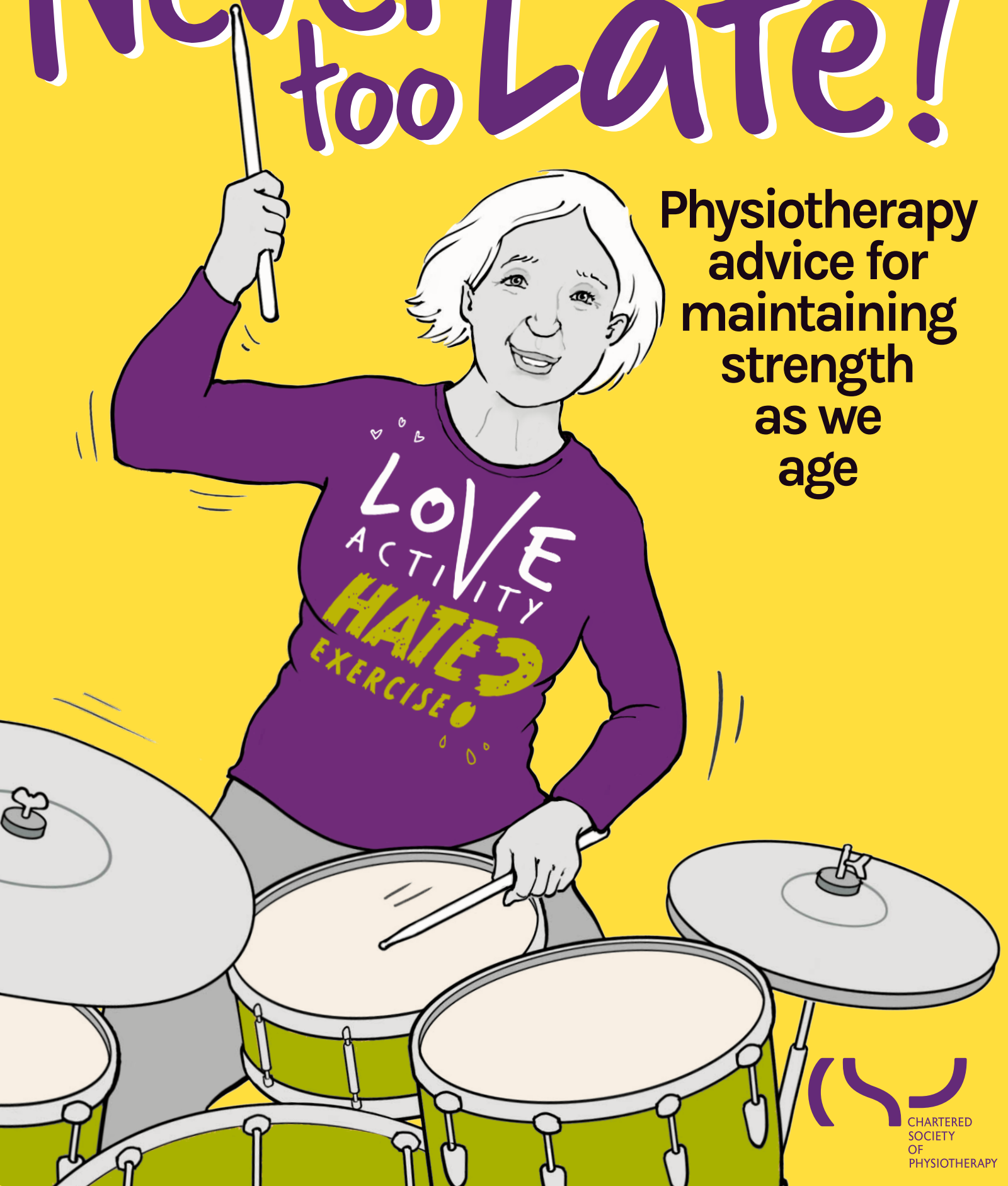
Never too Late!

Physiotherapy advice for maintaining strength as we age



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Use it or lose it!

For many people, retirement marks a time of new beginnings.
More time with the grandkids, new hobbies, greater opportunities to travel. But it can also be a time for finding new ways to maintain or build your strength while discovering talents you never knew you had. This is important because at present, too few people are doing as much exercise as they should each week – particularly to strengthen their muscles and bones.

Finding something that you love to do is the perfect way to help you remain active and strong as you age – while having fun at the same time.

Everyday strength

Many of us overlook everyday opportunities to strengthen our muscles.

These can be as simple as:

- **Carrying the shopping**
- **Scrubbing clean the car**
- **Digging in the garden.**

Try to incorporate those into your daily routine to feel the benefits. But as with any activity, our bodies adapt quickly. So always make sure you are making it that bit harder – carrying the shopping a little further, for example. Small amounts can add up to a big difference over time to keep you stronger for longer.

How much should I be doing?

Studies show we lose 3-5 per cent of muscle every year from the age of 30 if we do not take steps to maintain it.

Losing that strength puts us at greater risk of falls and other ill-health so it is vitally important to make countering the decline a priority in your life. The official guidelines call for everyone to do activities that strengthen your muscles and bones twice a week.

Meeting that target will help you not only prevent falls, but improve your mood, help your sleeping patterns and bring benefits for your overall health and wellbeing.

New beginnings

It's never too late to be what you might always have been.

There are so many activities out there that you may have wanted to do in the past but never got around to and retirement is a great opportunity to put that right.

Activities found to have the most benefit for muscle and bone strengthening include:

- **Ball games**
- **Racket sports**
- **Dance**
- **Nordic walking**
- **Resistance training.**

Also try to do the home-based exercises in the centre of this leaflet twice a week to supplement those activities.

But if none of those float your boat, there are plenty more to choose from – for instance, how about playing the drums? Whatever you do, just make sure it has a strength component. Ask your physio for suggestions or visit the BBC's Get Inspired website.

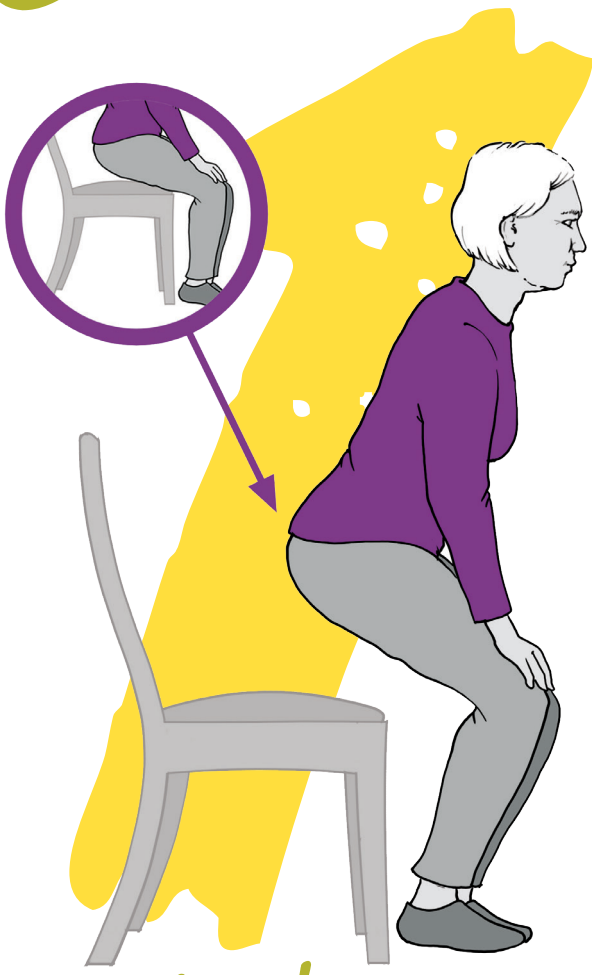
Tips for starting a new activity

- **Find something you enjoy** so that you'll keep going
- **Set goals for yourself** – big or small – to keep you motivated.
- **Pace yourself** – start slowly and gradually build up
- **It's ok to ache** but if pain persists, ease back and go slower.

Need more motivation and support? Find someone to join you!

Strength & Balance

Physios recommend these activities to help improve coordination and balance. Get on your feet and try them daily – or at least twice a week!



Sit to stand

Sit tall near the front of a chair with your feet slightly back. Lean forwards slightly and stand up (with hands on the chair if needed). Step back until your legs touch the chair then slowly lower yourself back into the chair. **Repeat 10 times.**

Heel raises

Stand tall, holding the back of a sturdy kitchen-type chair or kitchen sink, then lift your heels off the floor, taking your weight onto your big toes. Hold for three seconds, then lower with control. **Repeat 10 times.**

Strength & Balance

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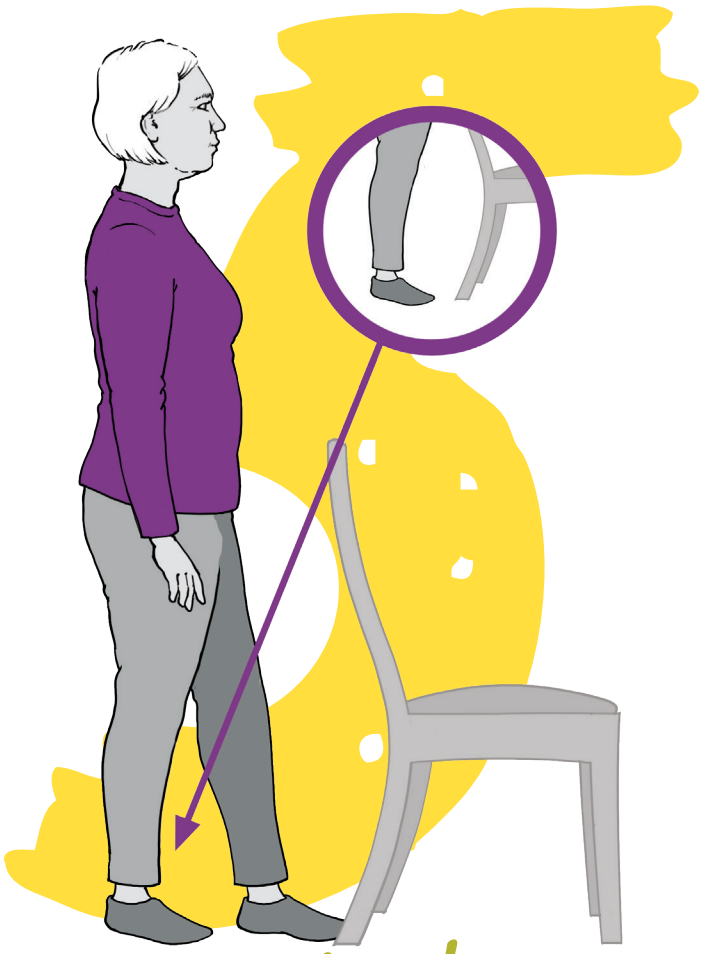
Toe raises

Stand tall holding the same support, then raise your toes – taking your weight on your heels. Don't stick your bottom out. Hold for three seconds, then lower with control.
Repeat 10 times.

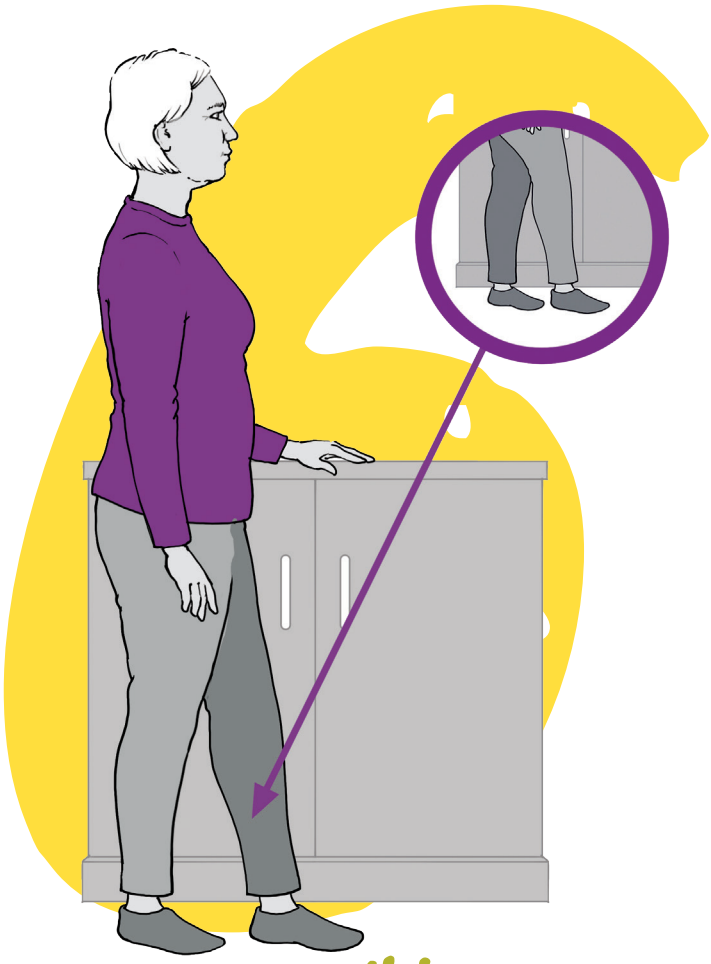
One leg stand

Stand close to your support and hold it with one hand. Balance on one leg, keeping the support knee soft and your posture upright. Hold the position for 10 seconds.
Repeat on the other leg.



Heel-toe stand

Stand tall, with one hand on your support. Put one foot directly in front of the other to make a straight line. Look ahead, take your hand off the support and balance for 10 seconds. Take the front foot back to hip width apart. **Then place the other foot in front and balance for 10 seconds.**



Heel-toe walking

Stand tall, with one hand on a support like a kitchen cabinet. Look ahead and walk 10 steps forwards, placing one foot directly in front of the other so that the feet form a straight line. Aim for a steady walking action. **Take the feet back to hip width apart, turn around and repeat the steps in the other direction.**

• **MAKE SURE** THE CHAIR YOU USE IS STURDY • **WEAR SUPPORTIVE** SHOES • **IF YOU EXPERIENCE** CHEST PAIN, DIZZINESS OR SEVERE SHORTNESS OF BREATH, STOP AND CALL YOUR GP OR CALL 111 • **A SLIGHT SORENESS** THE DAY AFTER IS QUITE NORMAL.

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THE CHARTERED SOCIETY OF PHYSIOTHERAPY
is the professional, educational and trade union body for the United Kingdom's 57,000 chartered physiotherapists, physiotherapy students and support workers.

This document can be made available in a format for people with sight problems. Tel: 020 7306 6666

DISCLAIMER: The activities described here should not cause any harm. They might not, however, be suitable for all people, particularly those at risk of falls and fractures. Consult a chartered physiotherapist or your GP before embarking on any new fitness regime, and if you do experience pain or discomfort as a result of any of the exercises, stop immediately.

Do more of what you ♡ with physio

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