



Patient & Family Guide  
2025

# General Leg Exercise Program

Aussi disponible en français : FF85-2085



[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

# General Leg Exercise Program

**The exercises in this guide will help you to:**

- ☑ Strengthen the muscles in your legs
  - ☑ Move the joints in your legs and prevent joint stiffness
  - ☑ Improve blood supply to your legs
- 
- The physiotherapist may ask you to do these exercises for both legs.
  - You are expected to exercise every day when you go home.
  - The physiotherapist will mark which of the exercises you are to do.

Do these exercises \_\_\_\_\_ times per day.

**What are your questions?**  
**Please ask. We are here to help you.**

After hip surgery, your surgeon will tell you if you need to follow hip precautions and for how long. If you have any questions, please ask your surgeon.

## **Hip precaution #1:**

**Do not twist at the hips.**



## **Hip precaution #2:**

**Do not cross your legs at the ankles or knees.**

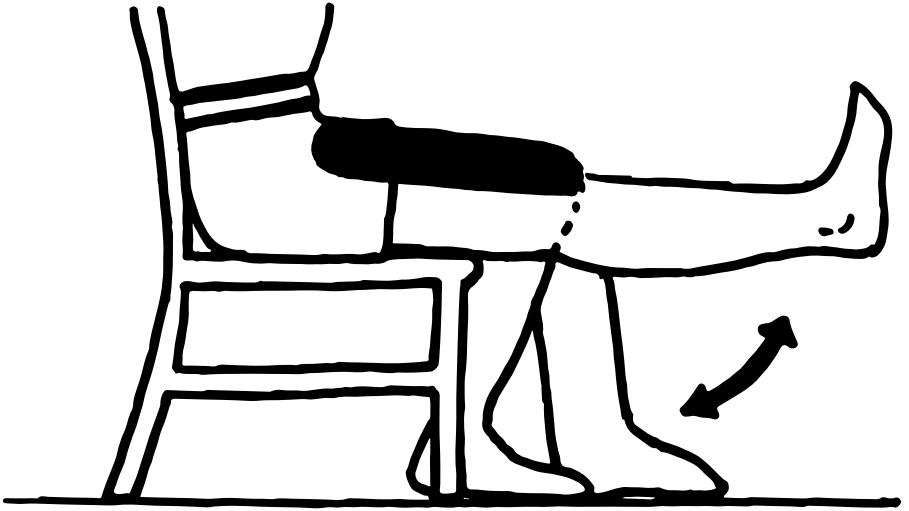


## **Hip precaution #3:**

**Do not bend your hip past 90 degrees by leaning forward or lifting your knee up.**



# Quad exercises



- Sit in a chair with your back straight.
- Straighten your leg and tighten the muscle on the front of your thigh.
- Keep the back of your leg on the chair.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Slowly lower your foot to the floor.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.

# Knee raises



- Sit in a chair with your back straight.
- Lift your knee.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Then lower your knee.
- Repeat with your other leg.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.

If you have had **hip surgery**, **do not** bend your hip past 90 degrees for the first 12 weeks.

# Hip adduction



- Sit in a chair with your back straight.
- Put a rolled towel between your knees.
- Squeeze your knees together.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.

# Hip abduction



- Sit in a chair with your back straight.
- Move your legs far apart.
- Then bring them together.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.



# Buttock squeezes



- Sit in a chair with your back straight.
- Squeeze your buttocks (bum) together.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.

# Toe raises



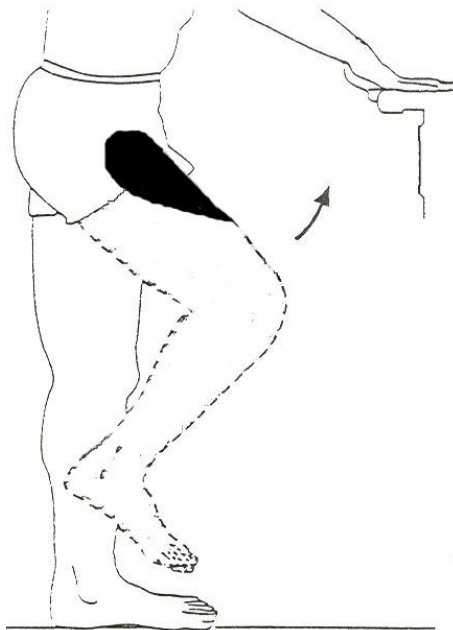
- Sit in a chair with your back straight.
- Move your heels back as far as possible.
- Bend your ankles by lifting your toes off the floor.
- Hold for 5 seconds. Relax your feet.
- Repeat 10 times.

# Standing leg exercises

Standing and holding onto a counter or sink:

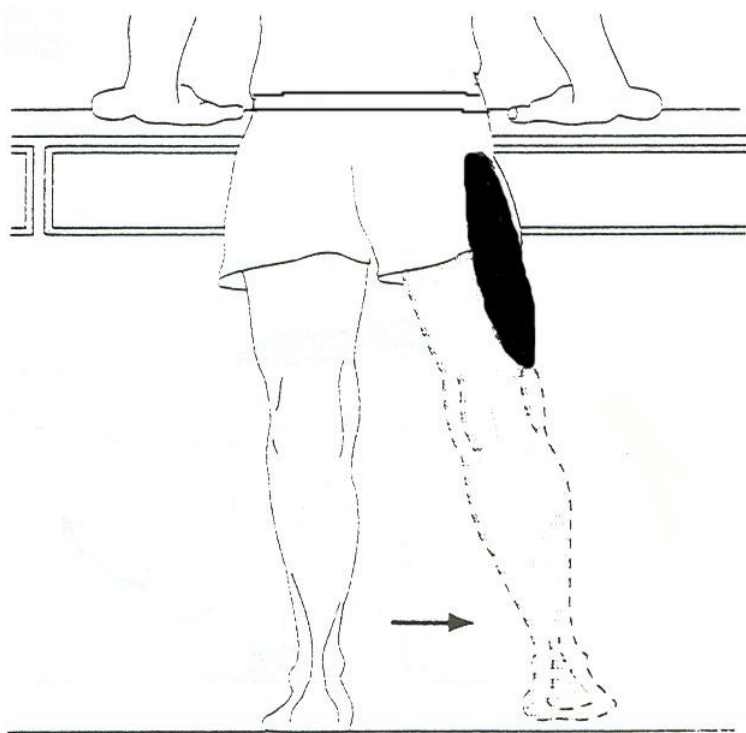
## Hip and knee flexion

- Stand up straight.
- Lift your knee upwards.
- **Do not** lean forward.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- You should feel the muscle on the front of your hip working.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.



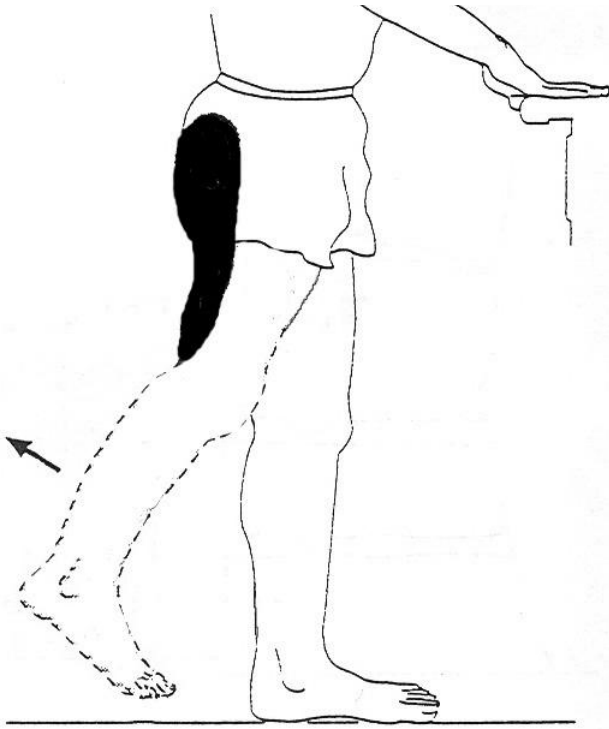
If you have had **hip surgery**, **do not** bend your hip past 90 degrees for the first 12 weeks.

# Hip abduction



- Stand up straight.
- Lift your leg out towards the side.
- **Do not** lean to either side.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- You should feel the muscles on the side of your thigh and hip working.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.

# Hip extension



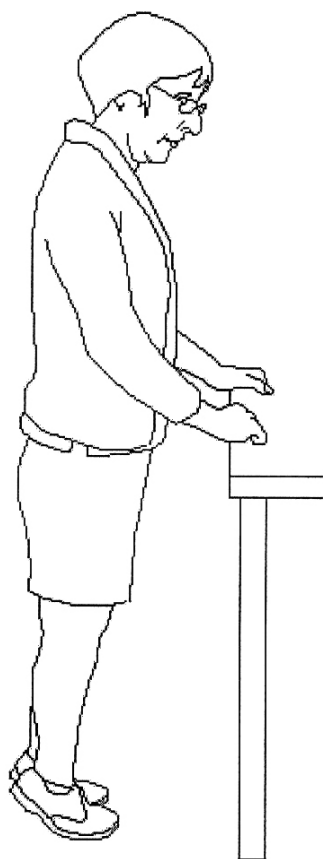
- Stand up straight.
- Lift your leg behind you while keeping your knee straight.
- **Do not** lean forward while lifting your leg.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- You should feel the muscles on the side of your thigh and your buttocks working.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.

# Knee flexion



- Stand up straight.
- Bend your knee by bringing your heel toward your buttocks.
- **Do not** move your hip.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- You should feel the muscle on the back of your thigh working.
- You may feel a stretch on the front of your thigh.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.

## Heel raises – 2 feet



- Stand on your toes.
- Hold for 5 seconds, then lower yourself down.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.

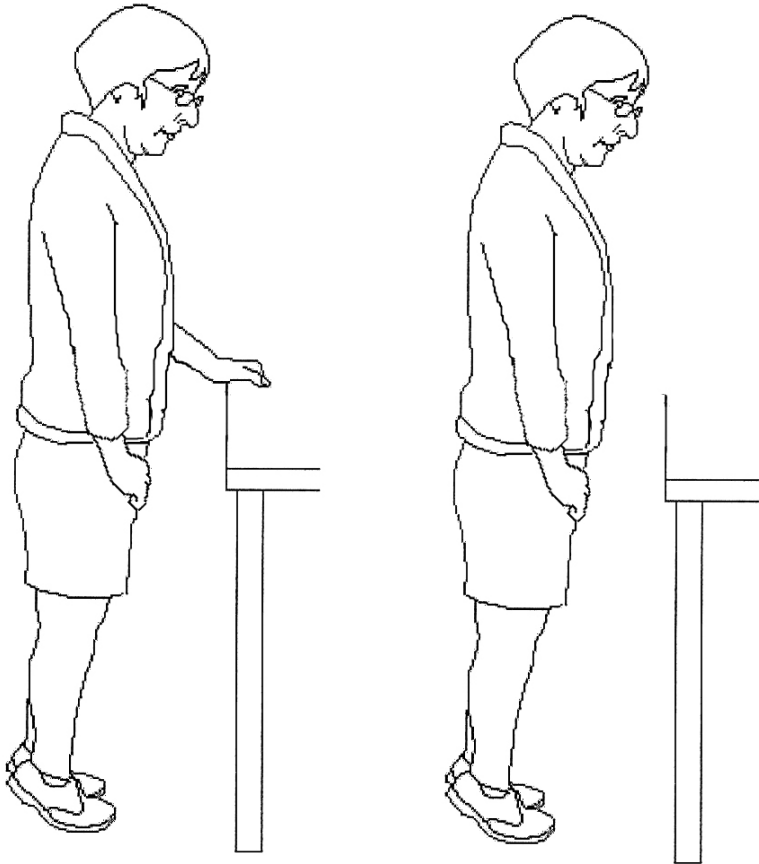
(continued on page 15)

# Heel raises – 2 feet (continued)

## Progression (to make it harder)

When you are feeling stronger:

- › Slowly use less hand support. For example, use both hands, then only 1 hand, then no hands.



- Hold for 5 seconds, then lower yourself down.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.

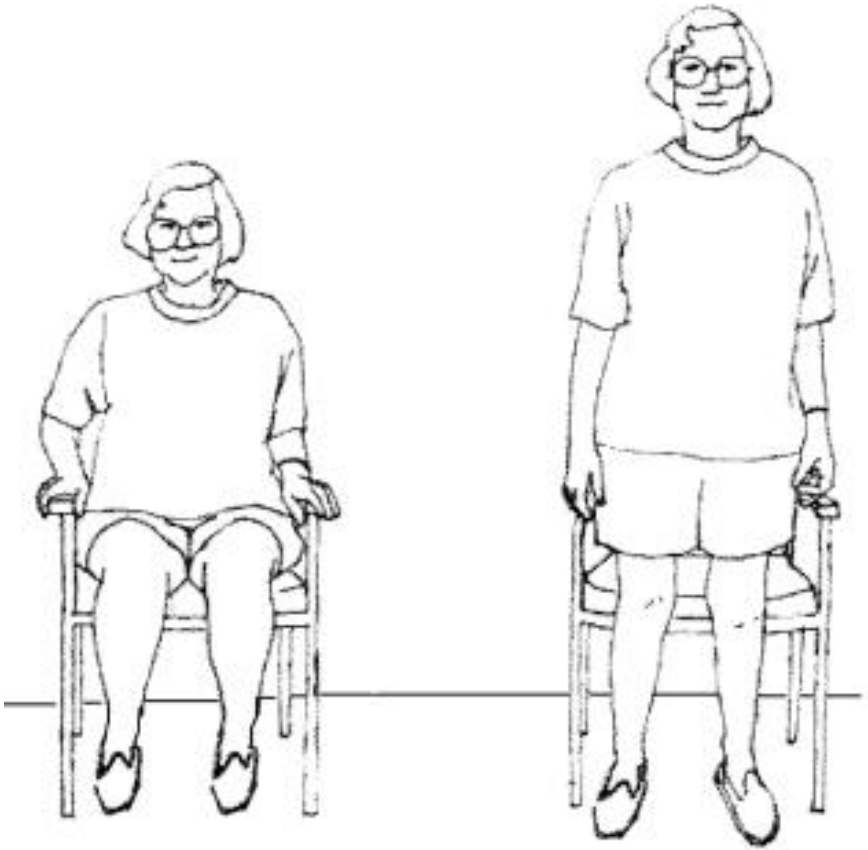


# Knee bends



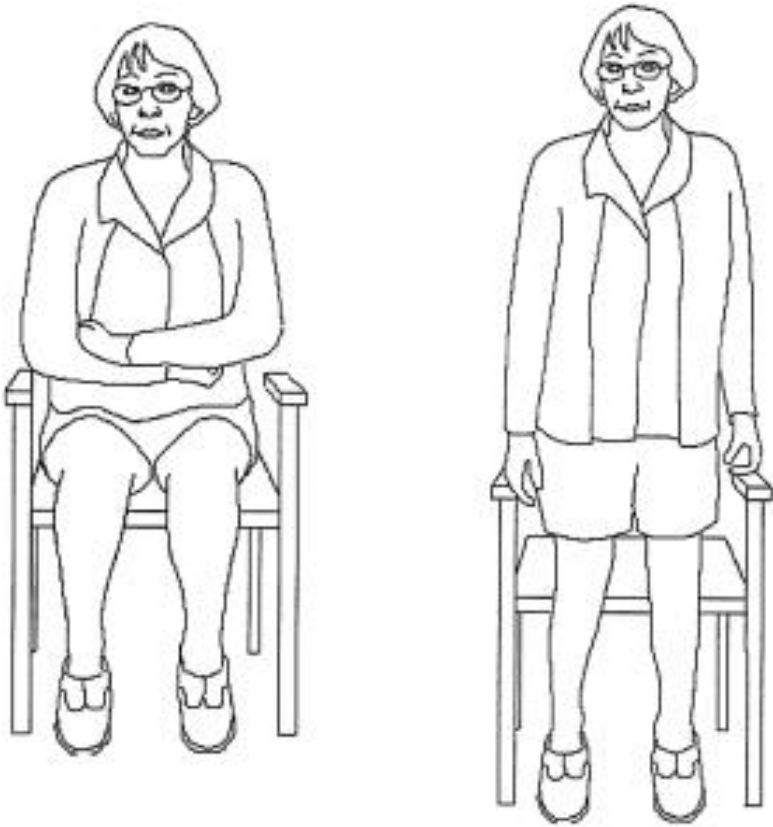
- Hold onto a counter for balance.
- Stand up tall and straight.
- Place your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Bend your knees slightly, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a squat.  
**Do not do a full squat.**
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Then straighten your knees.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.

## Sit to stand - hands on chair



- Move to the front of your chair.
- Put both of your hands on the arms of your chair.
- Lean forward, look up, and then stand.
- Stand for 5 seconds.
- Reach back for the arms of your chair and sit down.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.

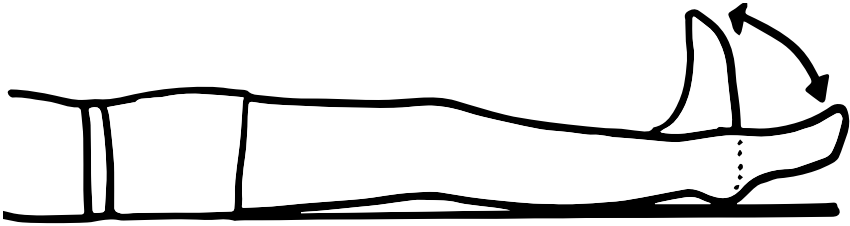
## Sit to stand - no hands on chair



- Move to the front of your chair.
- Lean forward, look up, and then stand without using your hands.
- Stand for 5 seconds.
- Then sit down.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.

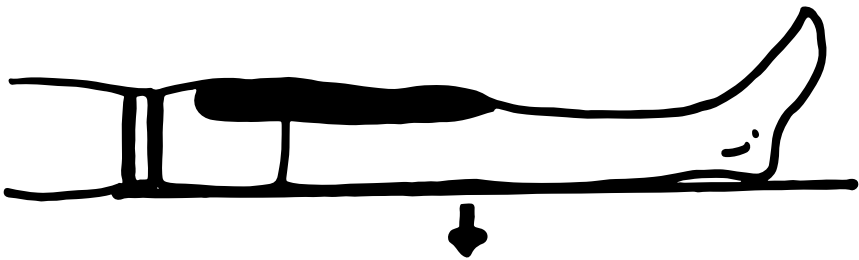
# Leg Exercises

While lying down:

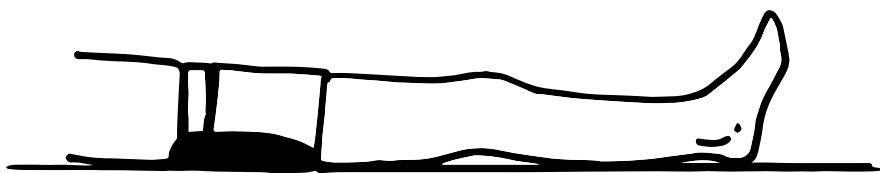


- Pump your ankle up and down.
- Do this for 1 minute and then relax.
- Do this once every hour while you are awake.

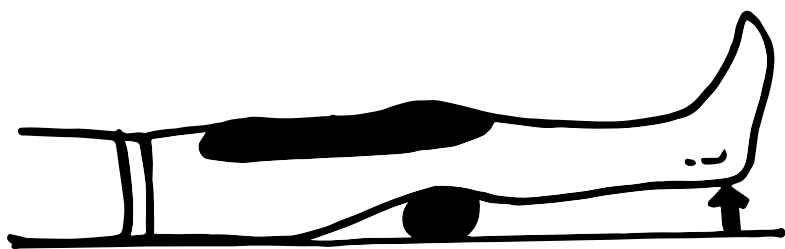
The highlighted area shows where you will feel the muscles working.



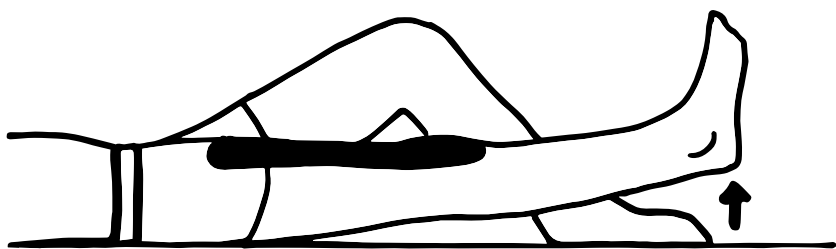
- Straighten your leg by tightening the muscles on the front of your thigh and pushing your knee into the bed.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.



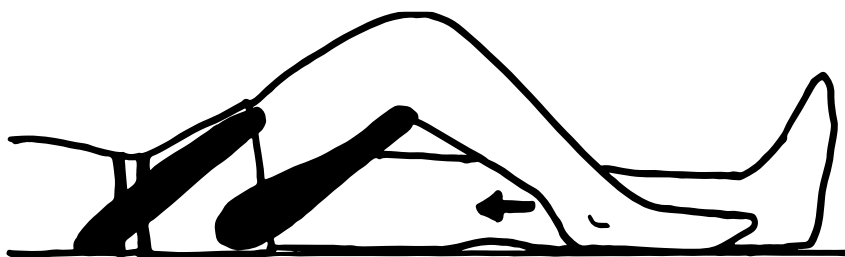
- Let your knee bend a little.
- Push your heel into the bed by tightening the muscles on the back of your thigh.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.



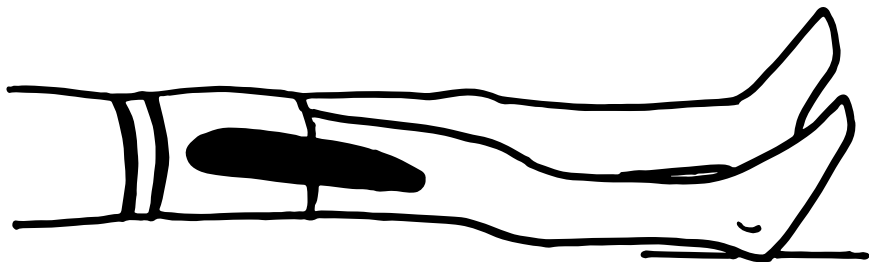
- Wrap a large can in a towel. Put it under your knee.
- Lift your foot off the bed by straightening your leg.
- **Do not lift your knee off the can.**
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.



- Bend your \_\_\_\_\_ leg and put your foot flat on the bed.
- Lift your \_\_\_\_\_ leg about 6 inches while keeping it as straight as possible.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.



- Slide your heel towards your buttocks.
- Keep your heel and buttocks on the bed.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.



- Slide your leg out to the side.
- Keep your toes pointed at the ceiling.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Bring your leg back towards your other leg.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.

This pamphlet is just a guide. If you have questions, please talk to your health care provider. We are here to help you.

## Notes:

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This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:  
[www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources)

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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