

# General Leg Exercise Program

## 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 this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:  
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

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

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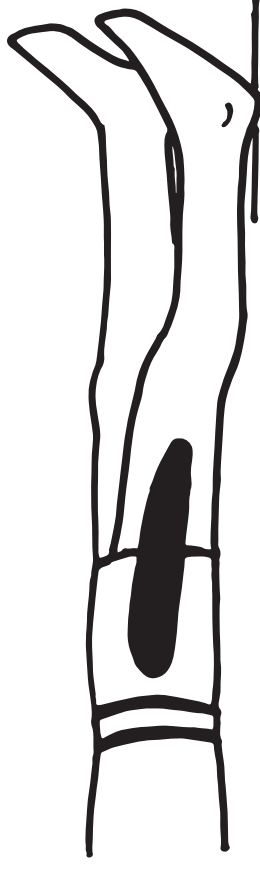
# General Leg Exercise Program

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 exercises \_\_\_\_\_ times per day.

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



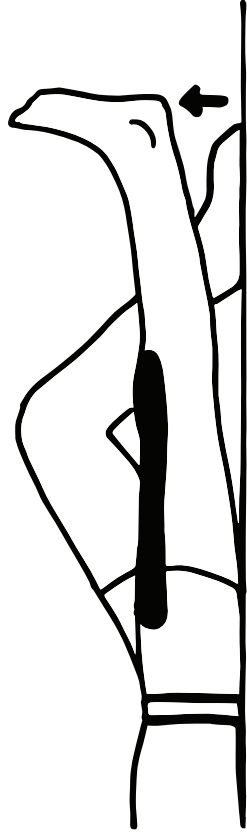
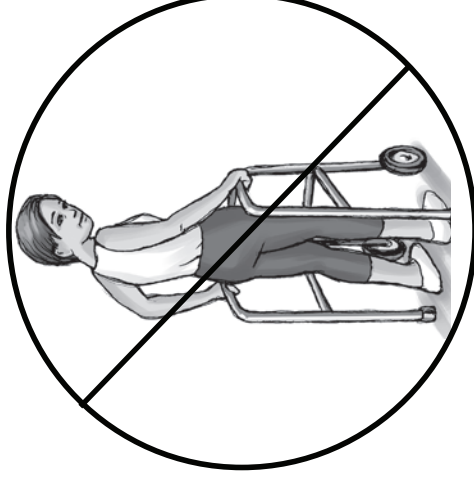
- Slide your leg out to the side.
- Keep your toes pointed at the ceiling.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Bring your leg back towards your other leg.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.

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

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.**



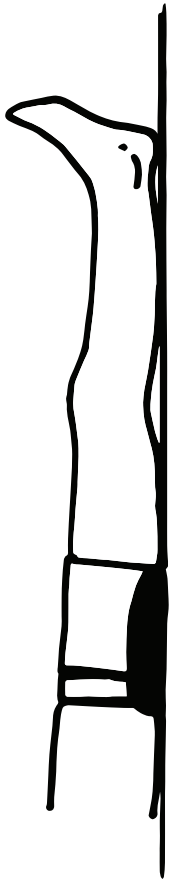
- Bend your \_\_\_\_\_ leg and put your foot flat on the bed.
- Lift your \_\_\_\_\_ leg about 6 inches while keeping it as straight as possible.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.



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

## Hip Precaution #2:

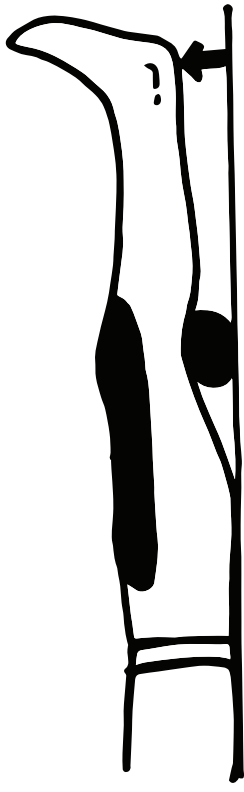
DO NOT cross your legs at the ankles or knees.



- 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.

## Hip Precaution #3:

DO NOT bend your hip past 90 degrees by leaning forward or lifting your knee up.



- 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.

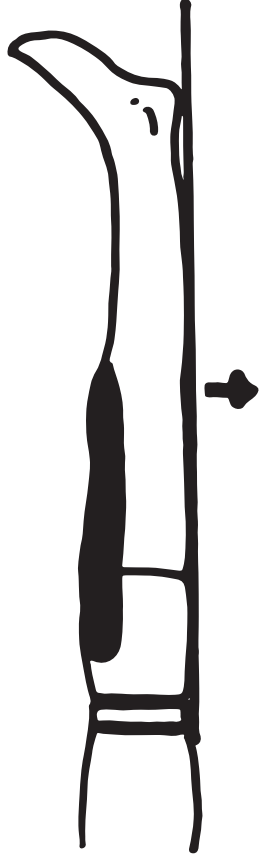
## Leg Exercises

While lying down:



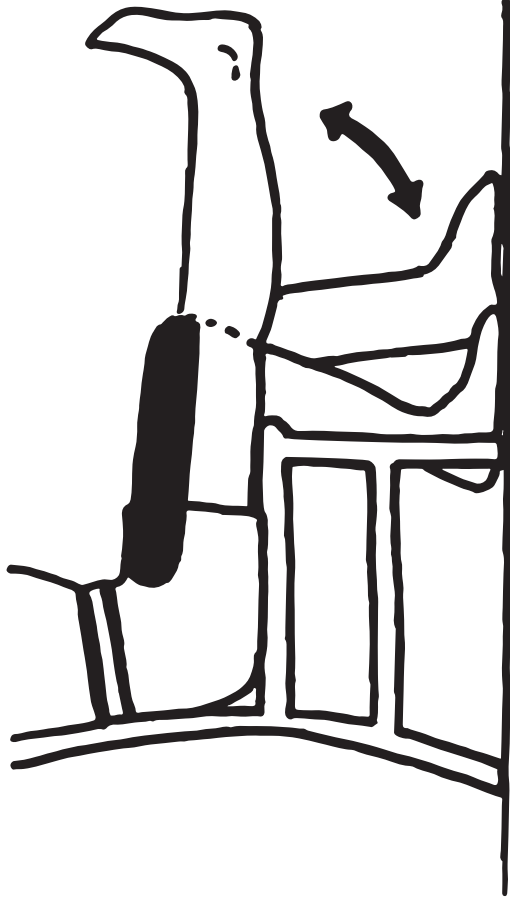
- Pump your ankle up and down.
- Do this for 1 minute and then relax.
- Do this once every hour while you are awake.

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.

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_ seconds.
- Slowly lower your foot to the floor.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

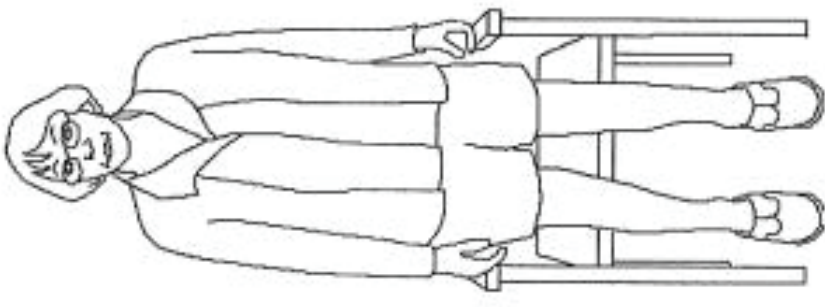
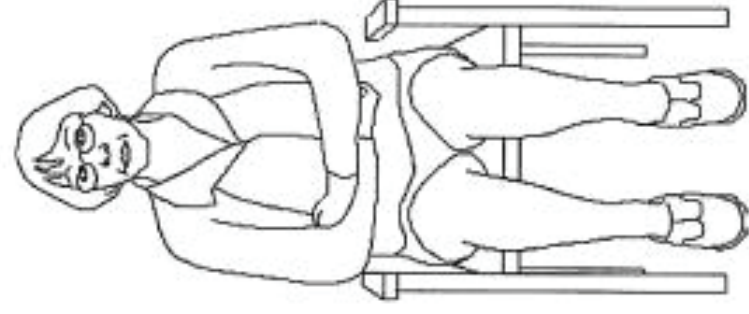
## Knee raises



- Sit in a chair with your back straight.
- Lift your knee.
- Hold for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds.
- Then lower your knee.
- Repeat with your other leg.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

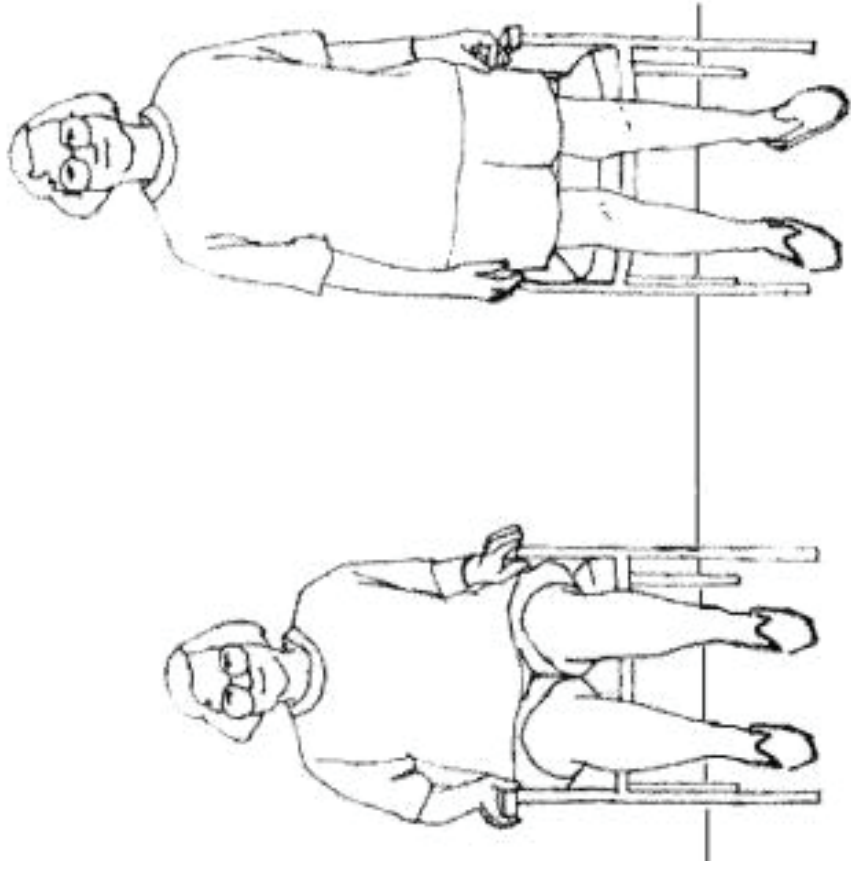
If you have had **hip surgery**, DO NOT bend your hip past 90 degrees for the first 12 weeks.

## Sit to stand - no hands on chair



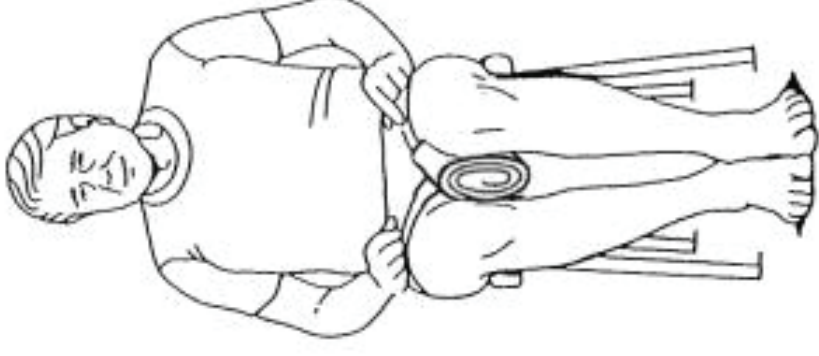
- Move to the front of your chair.
- Lean forward, look up, and then stand without using your hands.
- Stand for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds.
- Then sit down.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

## Sit to stand - hands on chair



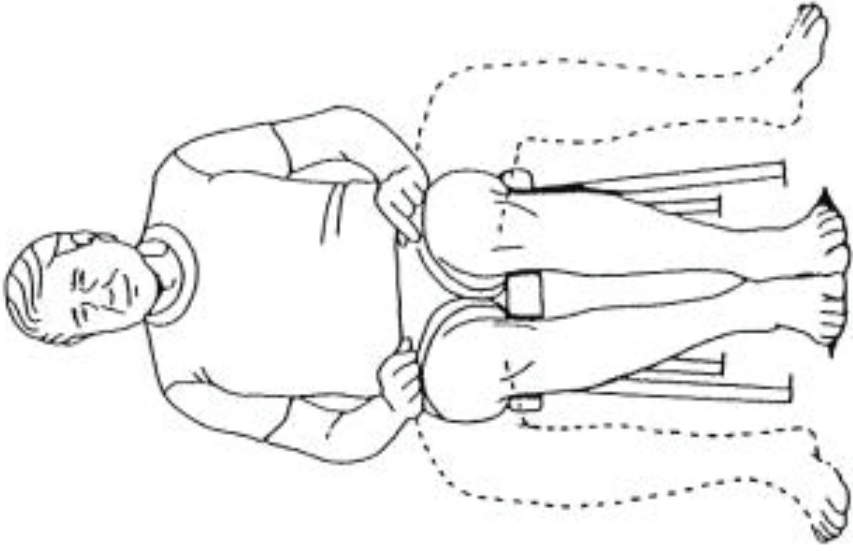
- Move to the front of your chair.
- Put both of your hands on the arms of your chair.
- Lean forward, look up, and then stand.
- Stand for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds.
- Reach back for the arms of your chair and sit down.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

## Hip adduction



- Sit in a chair with your back straight.
- Put a rolled towel between your knees.
- Squeeze your knees together.
- Hold for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

## Hip abduction



- Sit in a chair with your back straight.
- Move your legs far apart.
- Then bring them together.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ 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 \_\_\_\_\_ seconds.
- Then straighten your knees.

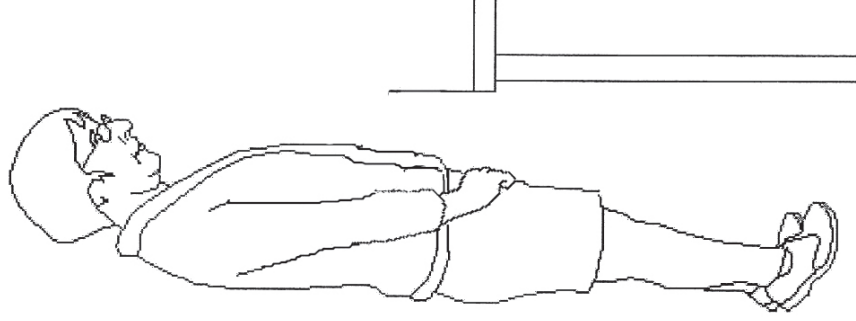
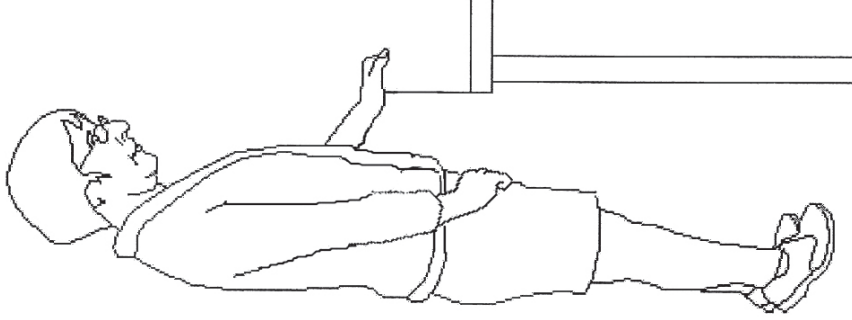


## Heel raises – 2 feet (continued)

### Progression (to make it harder)

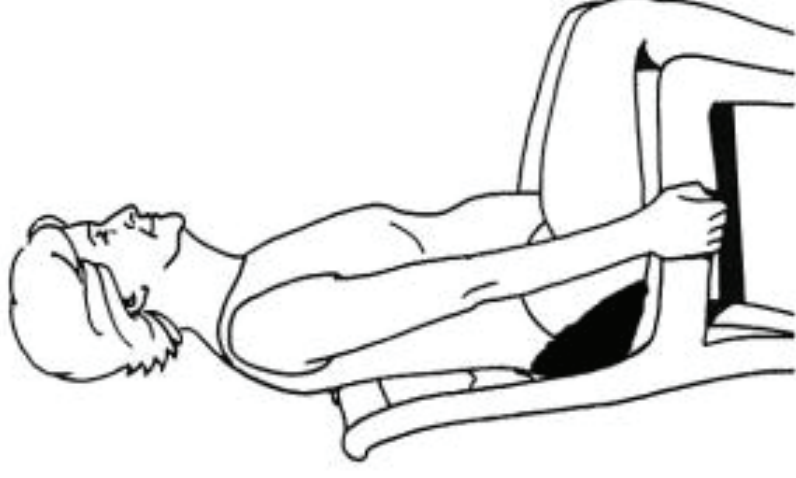
When you are feeling stronger:

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



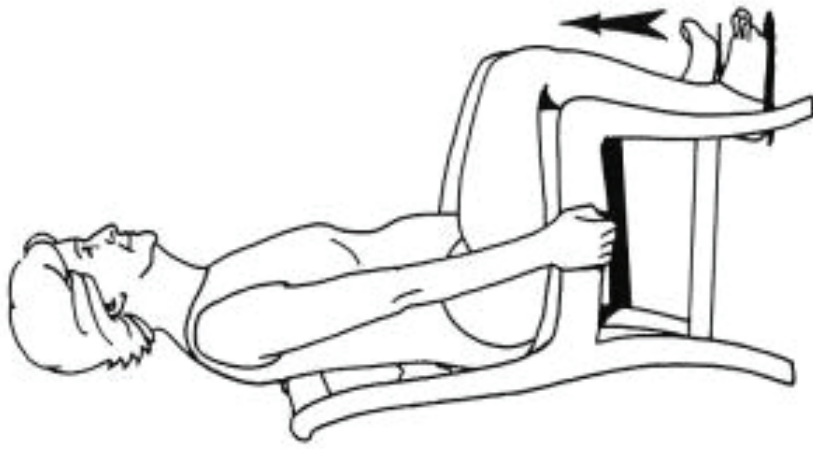
- Hold for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds, then lower yourself down.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

## Buttock squeezes



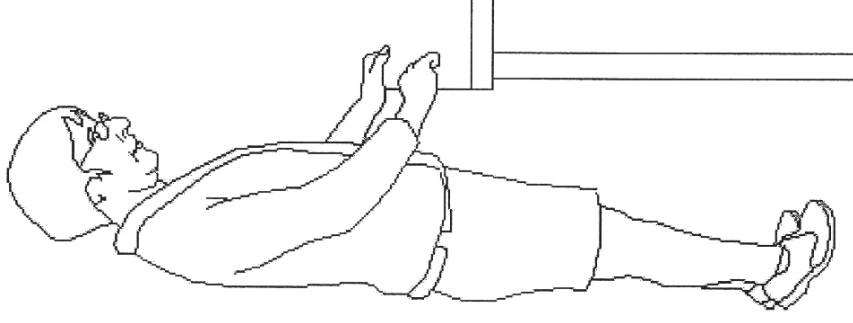
- Sit in a chair with your back straight.
- Squeeze your buttocks (bum) together.
- Hold for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_ seconds. Relax your feet.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

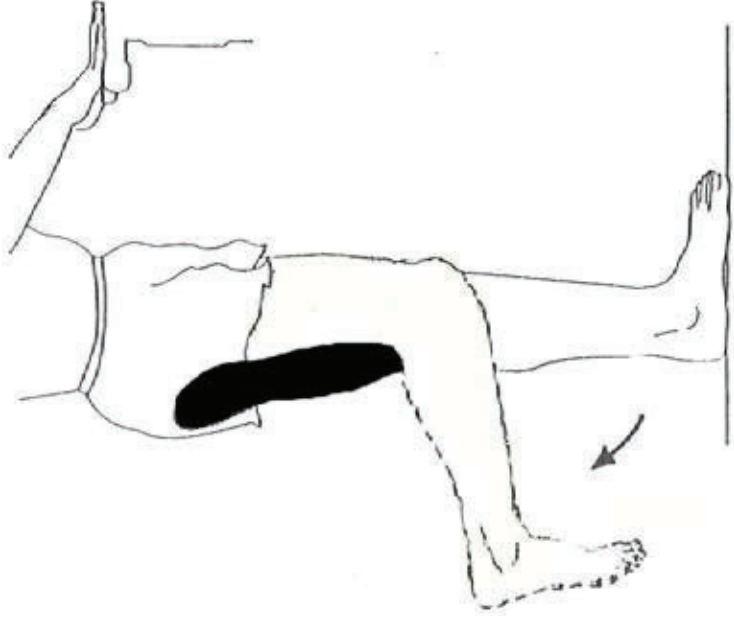
## Heel raises – 2 feet



- Stand on your toes.
- Hold for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds, then lower yourself down.
- Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

(continued on page 15)

## Knee flexion



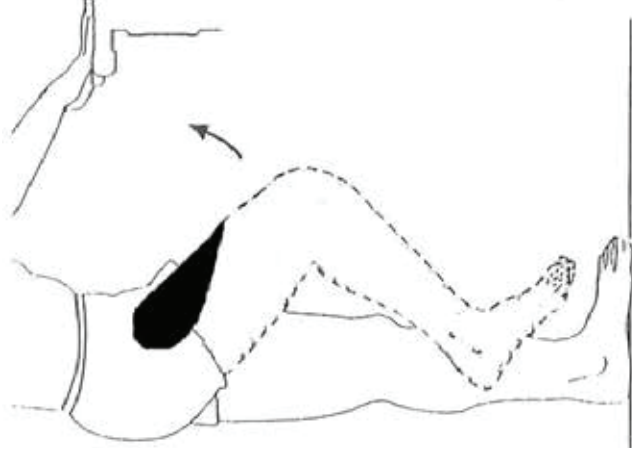
- Stand up straight.
- Bend your knee by bringing your heel toward your buttocks.
- **Do not** move your hip.
- Hold for 5 seconds.
- You should feel the muscle on the back of your thigh working.
- You may feel a stretch on the front of your thigh.
- Relax and repeat 10 times.

## Standing Leg Exercises

Standing and holding onto a counter or sink:

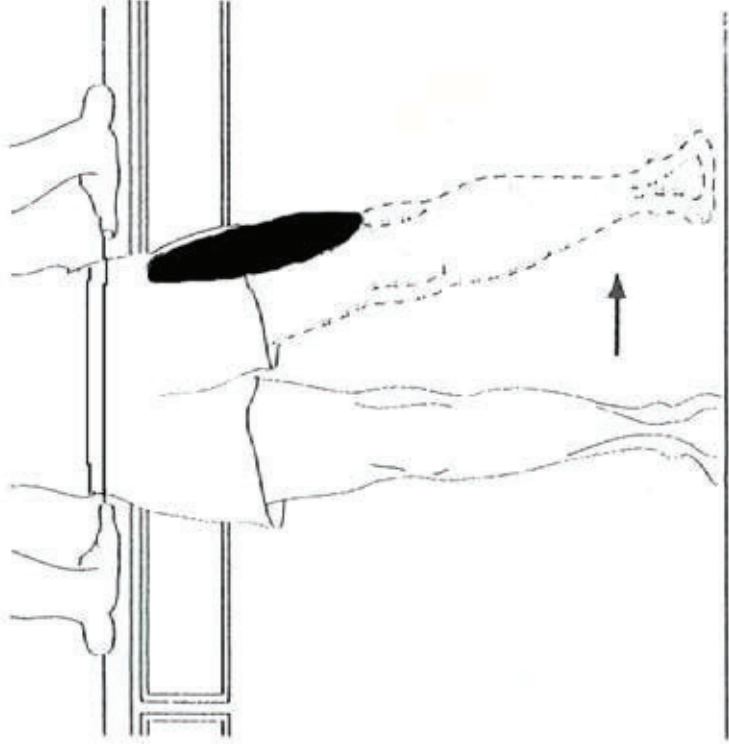
### Hip and knee flexion

- 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.



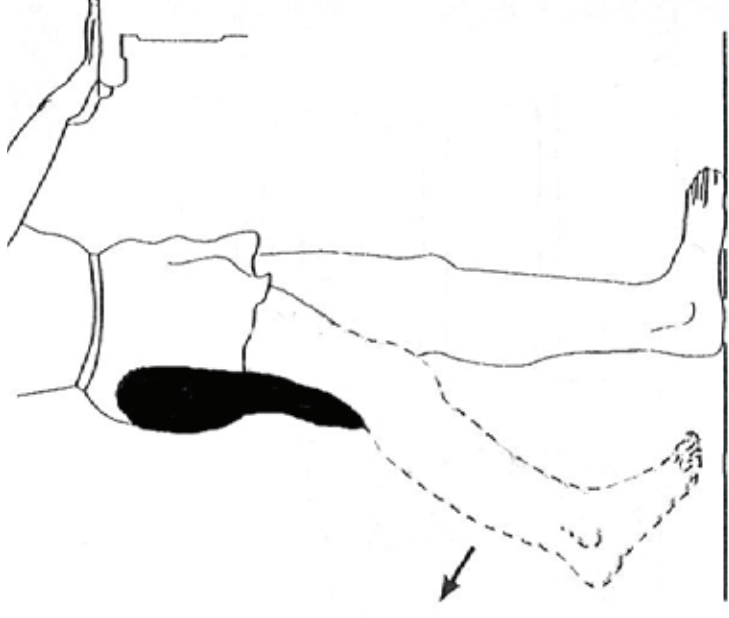
If you have had **hip surgery**, **DO NOT** bend your hip past 90 degrees for the first 12 weeks.

## 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.