

Get Moving with Bea Alt



Day 1: Let's Get Moving



Hello!

Welcome to day one of your **Get Moving** BrainyActive Challenge. Today, we will learn about the fitness research recommendations you can adopt to boost and maintain brain health.

We will use components of the Physical Activity Guidelines during the 21-day challenge. You can expect to engage with the guideline targets of muscle strength activities, balancing and stretching activities.

In **week one**, we will start slowly and gently. The first goal is to get you moving and add activities to your routine based on your comfort level. Moving gradually into **week two** (all puns intended), we will look at small ways to progress these activities. And finally, in **week three**, we will set ourselves up to effectively maintain these activities.

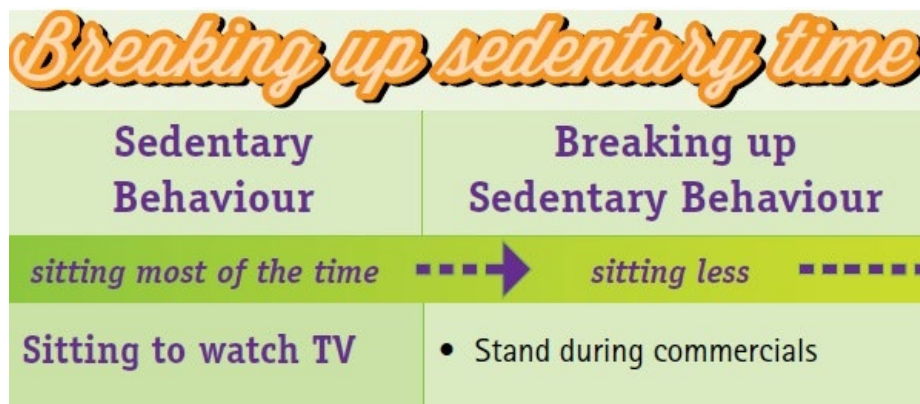
Now let's have some fun!

Let's Get Moving

Challenge #1 – The first commercial in most TV programs is 4-5 minutes long! For the next 21 days, use the first commercial of your favourite program to move! We will call it our daily FCC— *“First Commercial Challenge”*.

Day 1 FCC: Stand up and just move any way that works for you. You can go to the kitchen and grab water, walk around the sofa, or dining table-you can be as creative as you like.

Modification: Move to the front of your chair and wiggle your toes



**Please note that this is not a substitute for medical treatment. Consult a medical professional or healthcare provider if seeking medical advice, diagnoses, or treatment.*

About Bea

A lifelong sports and fitness enthusiast, Bea Alt began teaching in the late 1980s initially as a yoga instructor and since 2003 as a certified Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging Senior fitness Instructor. She draws on fitness courses in topics such as bone health, dementia, balance and pole walking to feed her passion for safe active aging and keeping it fun even in the present virtual environment.



Day 2: Let's Get Moving

Greetings to my Friday cardio buddies!

Let's kickstart our weekend with some moderate aerobic activity. Today's **First Commercial Challenge (FCC)** will get us off the couch and walking on the spot.

Day 2 FCC

Walk on the Spot (modification: walk sitting in your chair)



Begin with two minutes. Increase to five (the whole first commercial)

Be sure to choose a safe place with no scatter rugs or other tripping hazards and with a firm place to hold on to if you need support.

From: HSEP CCAA Home Support Exercise Program, The Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging

A personal note: The 2021 BrainyActive Challenge of 21 minutes a day is what got me back on track last September. I went from three days a week at the gym and teaching 7 hours a week to nothing when Covid-19 changed all our lives.

If you want to a little more pump to your challenge- here's something you can do. **Add one extra minute** to whatever activity you do daily and each day, increase it by another minute. Those extra minutes and the challenge to move every day worked magic for me last year.

P.S. I don't want you to feel overwhelmed. Our aim is to build a #brainy habit by the end of the Challenge at our own pace. Below are 10 tips to help you safely start an exercise program. You can also reach out to our team if you have more questions or need assistance.

[10 Tips for Exercise](#)

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Day 3: Let's Get Moving

Hello!

The amazing thing about balance is that if you practice it every day, you can notice an improvement in a short time. At the same time, if you don't challenge your balance regularly, you can also see a quick decline.

So today's **First Commercial Challenge (FCC)** focuses on balance. We will try to stand on one foot during the first commercial of your favourite program (*stay in the position for as long as you're comfortable*). Try to notice how stable or unstable you feel to keep a track of your progress by the end of the Challenge (*the goal is to practice every day*). You can even time how long you can take your hand off your support today- we will retest on the last day of the challenge.

Day 3 FCC: Stand on one foot



From: [balance.pdf \(winnipeg.inmotion.ca\)](https://winnipeg.inmotion.ca/balance.pdf)

1. Stand behind a chair or near a wall for balance (you can hold it with two hands, one hand, one finger or not at all).
2. Hold as long as you can – building up to 30 seconds or longer.
3. Repeat exercise on other foot. Repeat 2 times on each foot.

Modification: Keep your toe on the ground – do not put much weight on your toe just keep it there for more stability.

Improving balance is not only important for preventing falls and avoiding injuries but it makes us more confident in all our activities. Balance also makes us more likely to try new activities and challenge our brains.

Tip: Anything you do to challenge your balance is helpful in the longer run. Make a habit of standing on one foot whenever there is an opportunity and support to hang onto. At first, use a counter or sturdy chair for support. As you build confidence, you can incorporate balancing into daily activities like waiting in the grocery line and holding the cart handle. Start by shifting weight onto one foot to build muscles that help you balance.

Awareness is very important in preventing falls. Check your home and environment for tripping hazards. Be sure to turn on the lights when you get up at night. See the checklist below to find more ways to prevent falls.

Tips to Prevent Falls

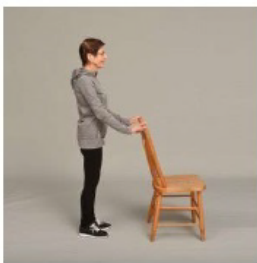
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Day 4: Let's Get Moving

It is Sunday – let's put on our favourite music and dance!

Today's **First Commercial Challenge (FCC)** is called **the Flamingo leg raise balance exercise**. Follow the instructions to complete your Day 04 Challenge. For fun (and exercise), you can raise your arm overhead to make it look like a flamingo beak and nod the beak to work the wrists.

Day 4 FCC: Do the Flamingo with Beak



Stand with feet slightly apart.

The knee of your support leg should be slightly bent.

Stand and lift the right knee, by sliding the right foot halfway up the left leg.

Hold the position for 2 seconds and return to start position.

Repeat using other leg.

Progression: take hand off the support and/or do not put foot down between leg lifts.

Optional fun: Raise opposite arm above head as far as is comfortable and make a beak shape with hand, press fingers to thumb and nod the beak.

Modification: In chair do beak, raising arm as high as is comfortable.



From: BSBB OPH (Better Strength Better Balance Ottawa Public Health)

Now, it's time to show off those dance moves! Start slow and make sure you have a safe place to dance - no furniture legs or area rugs to trip over. You can also step up the pace whenever you are ready. **Remember that raising your arms higher will always get the heart rate up.**

In my Get Moving classes, we freestyle dance to songs like *“Celebration”* *“Mama Mia”* *“Locomotion”* and *“la Bamba”*. You can always invite a partner, friend and/or your kid to join you- the more, the merrier!

There are some great kids' songs like Disney's Go Go Flamingo. Check it out below.

[Go Go Flamingo](#)

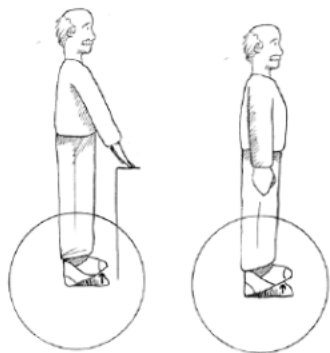
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Day 5: Let's Get Moving

It is Monday— a good day to work on strength building.

All fitness guidelines recommend strength training 2-3 times a week. We need to be strong to maintain our balance, engage in activities of daily living, support brain health and make life more fun. Today's First Commercial Challenge (FCC) is Toe raises. This exercise builds strength and improves balance at the same time.

Day 5 FCC: Toe Raises



1. Stand behind a chair or near a wall for balance (you can hold on with two hands, one hand, one finger or not at all).
2. While keeping your heels on the floor, slowly lift your toes one at a time or both together.
3. During this exercise, be sure to keep your heels in line with your toes and notice the muscles along the front of your shin.

Modification: Move to the front of your chair and tap your toes.

Toe raises are important for everyone- from athletes to older adults. **This exercise help builds strength, mobility and stability in the muscles located in front of your ankle and lower leg.** Strengthening the muscles at the front of the shin keeps you from dragging your feet as you age well. Toe raises also **increase blood flow to the heart.** And anything that benefits the heart, benefits the brain.

Since it is a bodyweight exercise, it can be done anytime, anywhere. You can also do toe raises sitting on a chair. You can ramp the session up using bands or weights.

We will explore other important strength exercises in the coming days but if you would like to read more about the benefits and performance of toe raises, you can check out the article below.

Regards,
Bea

[Benefits of Toe Raise](#)

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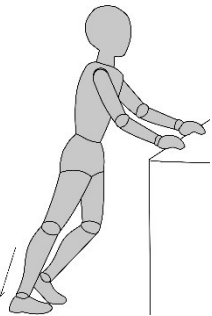
Day 6: Let's Get Moving

Hello Champs,

You've are doing great so far in your challenge! To date, we have talked about moving and practicing our balance daily and adding strength training 2-3 times a week. For Day 6 of your Challenge, we will learn **gentle stretching**.

Since tight calves are a common problem, we will do dynamic stretches for the calves for our **First Commercial Challenge (FCC)**.

Day 6 FCC: Dynamic calf stretch



1. Hold onto a counter (or place hands on a wall at shoulder height).
2. Step one leg back so that the heel just touches the ground. Now, step the other foot back letting the knee bend so the heel is off the ground.
3. Keeping your body straight, bend alternate knees, letting that heel come off the ground while the other heel is pressed into the ground. Gentle stretching should not cause pain.

Modification (ankle circles in the chair): From a seated chair position, raise one foot off the ground and circle the ankle in a clockwise direction first and then in the opposite direction. Work on getting a full range of motion. Alternate legs after a few minutes.

Dynamic stretches are safe to do anytime. Static stretches (held stretches) are best to practice after muscles are warmed up, for instance, after a walk or workout. Stretches help maintain flexibility (range of motion) and loosen muscles that get tight during daily activities or workouts.

Tip: When doing static stretches, keep your pace gentle. Don't hold your breath, bounce or hold a painful stretch. You should feel some tension but if it hurts, you have gone too far. **Always listen to your body!**

Regards,

Bea

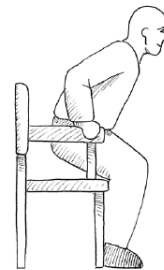
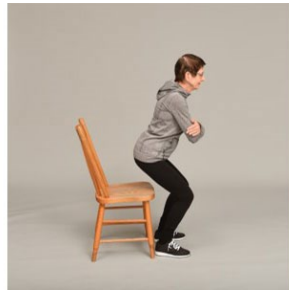
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Day 7: Let's Get Moving

It's Wednesday, time for our second strength-training day.

Today's **First Commercial Challenge (FCC)** will be sit-to-stand, often called the independence exercise because it builds and maintains the strength to get out of a seated position without using hands.

Day 7 FCC: Sit to Stand



- Sit towards the front of the chair with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Lean slightly forward. Press your feet into the floor.
- Stand up slowly, using your legs, not your arms. Try thinking of pushing your hips forward to assist your legs.
- Keep looking forward. Stand tall.
- **To sit:** lean slightly forward, bend your knees and slowly lower your buttocks back into the chair.

Modification: Use a chair with sturdy arms or use your arms to push on the seat of the chair.

Modified From: BSBB and HSEP

Some form of the **sit-to-stand exercise** (or its cousin the squat) appears in almost all exercise routines. It is a great compound exercise to work on the large muscle groups of the lower body and the core. It is easily scalable – variations range from using a chair with sturdy arms and adding cushions to raise the seat height and lowering the chair height (even to the floor), doing it on one leg or adding weight. Learn more variations below.

[Sit-Stand Variation](#)

Now that we are out of our chairs, let's look at **step counting**. Counting steps does not work for everyone but for some having a **daily step target is motivating** and adds some aerobic activity to the routine. It gives measured evidence of progress or of meeting a set daily target. I find checking my step counter can be the push it takes to get me out of my chair or away from my computer.

Regards,

Bea

[10,000 Step Counter](#)

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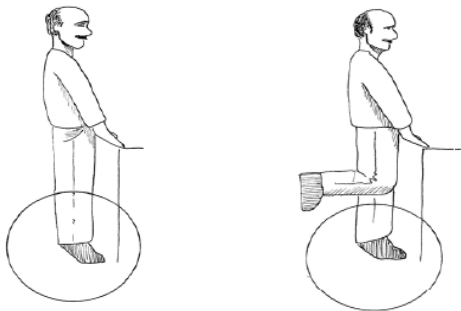
Day 8: Let's Get Moving

We've completed a week of our Moving Challenge! Kudos to all!

This week, we will look at ways to progress our activity levels. Progression can involve increasing frequency, duration, intensity or difficulty of any activity. Today, after the FCC, we will focus on progressing our cardio activity with a little more intensity.

But first, let's get on our toes. Today's **First Commercial Challenge (FCC)** will be toe stands (heel raises) with some suggestions to increase the difficulty.

Day 8 FCC: Toe Stand



- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart.
- Slowly rise onto the balls of your feet.
- Hold for 2 seconds then slowly lower heels to the floor.
- Repeat

Progression: Lift one leg off the floor and raise it onto the ball of your standing foot. And/or while standing on your toes, try to take your hand off the chair.

Modification: Move to the edge of the chair and raise your heel as high as you can.

My favourite way to progress any cardio activity is to add intervals of faster, more intense or more difficult activity to daily movements. For example, during your daily walks, speed up between two street lights (in my case, the country between two mailboxes) and then return to your regular pace for a recovery period.

Interval training is not a new concept (it has been used even by elite athletes for over 80 years), but recent research suggests that it is particularly beneficial for older adults. Studies show that **High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)** can improve brain health and slow aging. But let's start by just walking faster or dancing a bit harder for short intervals during our regular activities.

If you want to learn more about what's coming up this week and interval training, listen to the audio below.

Regards,

Bea

[Interval Training](#)

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Day 9: Let's Get Moving

Hello!

Strength training can be progressed by either increasing the repetitions and sets or by increasing the difficulty/loading/intensity. And push-ups are a perfect candidate for this goal.

So today, we will tackle the wall push as the **First Commercial Challenge FCC**— you will need a wall space or a counter to get started.

Day 9 FCC: Wall Push Up



- Place your hands on the wall at shoulder height.
- Keep your heels on the floor.
- Slowly lower yourself toward the wall bending your elbows while keeping your back straight. Hold for 2 seconds.
- Slowly extend your arms to return to the start position. Hold for 2 seconds. Keep elbows soft (not locked).

- Repeat.

Progression: move feet out further from the wall and/or stand on one foot.

Modification: Band chest press in a chair. Place a band around your upper back. Grab the ends of the band, with elbows bent and palms facing down or inward. Press out, extending your elbows forward to shoulder level. Slowly return to starting position. **Be sure to engage the abdominal muscles.**

The push-up is another exercise that appears in almost every workout plan. It is a perfect example of Progression. There is always a version for any fitness level. **Your form is very important to get the full benefit of push-ups.** It is not just a shoulder/chest strengthening exercise, but if done correctly, it also challenges and strengthens the core. Check out the blog below for more variations of push-ups and how to perform them with maximum benefit by Margret Martin.

Regards,
Bea

[Push-Up Variation](#)

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Day 10: Let's Get Moving

Another day, another way to advance our cardio workout!

One way to increase the intensity of your workout is by adding walking poles to it. These poles enable a full-body workout, even while you're walking.

As for our **First Commercial Challenge FCC**, we will do a **full-body stretch** today. You can stretch using the poles or the back of a chair or the wall for support.

Day 10 FCC: Whole Body Stretch



Holding poles: Bring your poles to the front and reach your hands forward, your hips back and your chest down. This should feel like a nice stretch with no pain.

Variation: Place your hands on the back of the chair or place them on a wall at hip height and make a right angle with your body. Bring feet a little closer to the chair/wall than the hips. Bend one knee and allow the hip to drop (alternate sides).

Modification: Stay in the seated stretch and hold the position for 10 seconds. You can lean forward, bending at hips – flat back.

Many studies have confirmed the benefits of adding poles to your walk. My knees don't let me jog anymore so I have added poles to my walk to increase the aerobic effort of the walk while getting a full body workout.

Poles can also be used in rehabilitation and for balance. The resources provided below discuss the history of poles and types of pole design, the research-confirmed benefit and how they can be used in a community setting to promote better health.

Have a stretchy-Saturday,
Bea

[Walking Poles Guide](#)

[Nordic Walking](#)

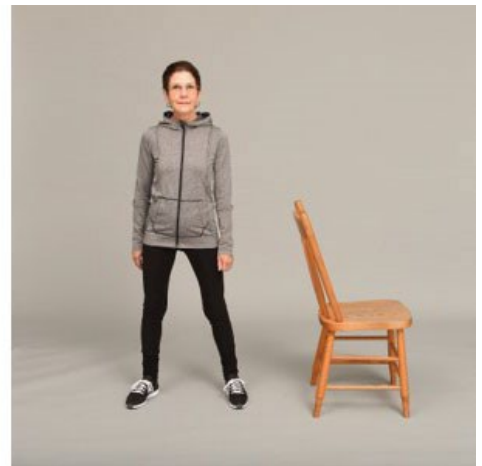
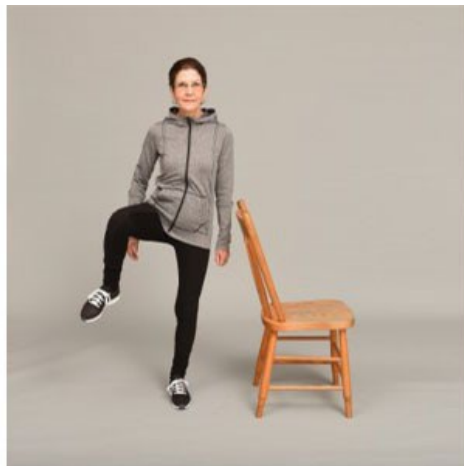
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Day 11: Let's Get Moving

Hello!

Add some spice to your Challenge today! Invite a friend, partner child or grandchild (or your pet) to join you in staying active. For our **First Commercial Challenge FCC** today, we are going to step over that random object lying on the floor, or it could be a pet (remember they don't stay still so be aware and lift your leg high). Or perhaps it is that new toy truck you and your grandchild were playing with before you both sat down to watch a cartoon.

Day 11 FCC: Step Over



1. Hold onto a chair or counter or just some support close by.
2. Step to one side, lifting leg high as though stepping over a small box (dog, cat or toy).
3. Return to the start position by stepping back over that imaginary box.
4. Repeat using the other leg.

Modification: Step over the imaginary box, dog or toy from a seated position.

It is always more fun to work out with a friend or partner. However, when even a socially distanced walk is not possible there are other ways to stay in touch and keep motivated. My daughter (who lives in Scotland) and I work out on FaceTime once a week with a personal trainer. It makes my entire week! Many activity apps allow you to challenge a friend or share your workout details with a group of friends to keep you all motivated. My neighbour used to walk with a colleague during their lunchtime at the office. Now working from home, they talk over a call during lunchtime and both walk somewhere near home.

Always remember that any activity is better than just sitting. If you are lucky enough to have a child in the house (even for short visits) you will already know that playing with a child or grandchild can definitely keep you moving. Children are naturally active and can provide inspiration to move in fun ways. Take advantage of that to add activity to your day. You can also share your commitment to being active with young children so they make it a life habit along with you. Click below for some fitness-oriented activity books for the young and those young at heart.

Regards,

Bea

[Make a Splash Activity Book](#)

[Snow Much Fun Colouring Book](#)

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Day 12: Let's Get Moving

Hello!

Adding stairs or incline training to walking, hiking or running program is a very efficient way to increase activity intensity. Today, we will add side leg raises to our **First Commercial Challenge FCC**.

Day 12 FCC: Side Leg Raises



1. Stand with feet together.
2. The knee of your support leg should be slightly bent.
3. Slowly lift one leg out to the side, and keep the back straight and tall.
4. Keep your foot pointed forward and flexed.
5. Hold for 2 seconds and return to the start position.
6. Repeat using the other leg.

Modification: Move to the front of your chair and move your leg to the side, hinging at the hip.

One classic way to incorporate additional activity into your day is to **“take the stairs”**. But you can also add a stair workout to your indoor or outdoor activity. You can make it into an interval workout walk quickly up the stairs and then using the walk down as your recovery period (be sure you have a sturdy railing).

Walking uphill, even at a slow pace, can increase your aerobic intensity to moderate or even strenuous levels. Hillwalking engages your core muscles as well as the muscles of the front and back of the leg. The hills do not have to be mountains. Even the ditch in front of my house provides a good boost to my morning pole walking routine.



Note: Pay attention to any soreness or discomfort in your legs (particularly the knees) and lower back. **Start slowly and listen to your body!!**

Check out the link below to learn more about stair and hill work.

[Walking Uphill or Downhill?](#)

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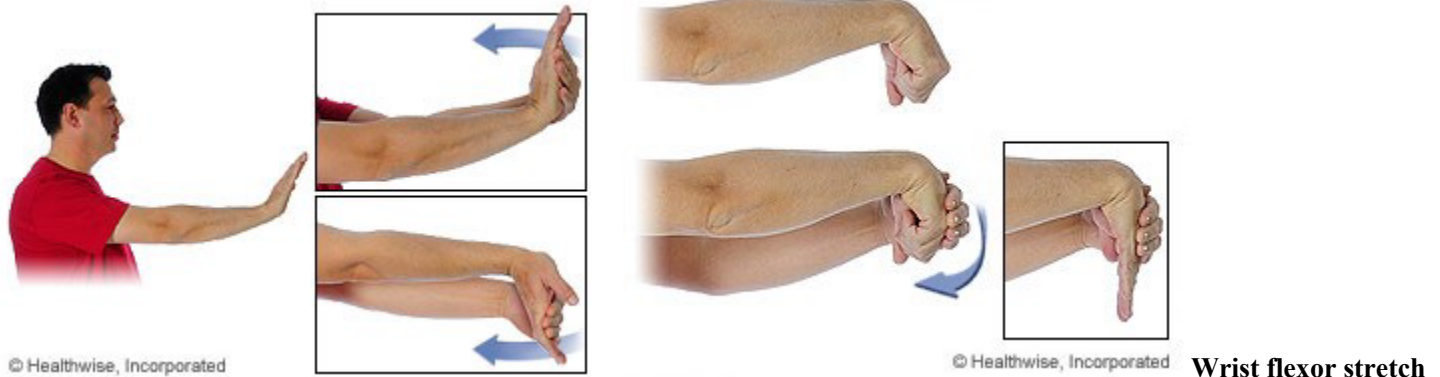
Day 13: Let's Get Moving

Hello!

Our brains love when we challenge them with both movement and memory exercises at the same time. Today, we will talk about how learning a dance (or Tai Chi form) fills that bill.

But first, let us get ready for the **First Commercial Challenge FCC**. We will stretch the wrist, which not only makes our wrists more flexible in case we fall on them but relieves elbow and carpal tunnel pain from sports or daily activities like carrying grocery bags or overusing computer mouse.

Day 13 FCC: Stretch for Tennis and Golfer's Elbow or Wrist Flexor and Extensor Stretch



1. Extend your arm in front of you with your palm facing away from your body.
2. Bend back your wrist, pointing your hand up toward the ceiling.
3. With your other hand, gently bend your wrist farther until you feel a mild to moderate stretch in your forearm.
4. Hold for at least 15 to 30 seconds.
5. Repeat steps 1 through 5, but this time extend your arm in front of you with your palm facing up.
6. Then bend back your wrist, pointing your hand toward the floor.

Wrist Extensor Stretch

1. Extend your affected arm in front of you and make a fist with your palm facing down.
2. Bend your wrist so that your fist points toward the floor.
3. With your other hand, gently bend your wrist farther until you feel a mild to moderate stretch in your forearm.
4. Hold for at least 15 to 30 seconds.
5. Repeat steps 1 through 5 with your fingers pointing toward the floor.
6. And you can also repeat this stretch with your fingers pointing up.

From: [Golfer's Elbow: Exercises \(alberta.ca\)](http://alberta.ca) MyHealth.Alberta.ca

Now, it is time to get down to some serious dancing. Research shows that combining brain work of learning dance steps with movement and aerobic activity of dancing provides measurable benefits to the way our brains function. (see below for the link to a study that examines the neurological potential of dance therapy).

Activities like Tai Chi have also shown similar results. The real bonus here is that dancing and activities like Tai Chi are not only beneficial but also fun! It is wonderful to learn and dance in a social setting, there are some great opportunities to learn a dance or Tai Chi online. I am also sharing a link to a video of the Honky Tonky dance made by Lynda Burke who is trying valiantly to teach me some line dance routines – which is a real challenge to my two left feet- hope you enjoy it!

Here are some beginners dance routines for you to follow:

- [Honky Tonky by Goodwill Dancers, a bilingual local dance group based in Gatineau](#)
- [Lynda Burke's video](#)
- [Margret Martin's Melioguide \(Tai Chi instruction video\)](#)

Regards,

Bea

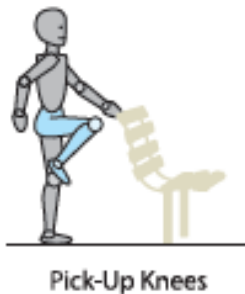
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Day 14: Let's Get Moving

Hello!

We can add strength exercises (warm-up and stretching) to our walk to make it a Walkabout. For our **First Commercial Challenge FCC**, we will choose the knee-up exercise.

Day 14 FCC: Pick-up Knees



1. Pick up the knees and swing the arms.
2. Use the abdominals and thighs, not the lower back muscles.
3. Keep the body straight do not bend to meet the knee,
4. Start slowly and increase the pace as you warm up.

Modification: Move to the front of your chair and lift alternate knees. Use the abdominal muscles and keep your back straight and chest open.

In addition to the well-established fitness benefit of walking, research has shown that the foot's impact on the ground helps increase the blood flow to the brain.

Please find the three progressive Walkabouts in the [Move for Life poster](#). The poster illustrates **warm-up, strength and stretching exercises**. It shows how to use a park bench for support in performing these exercises. Some newer parks also have fitness stations along the trails/walkways.

You can also get creative by using the play area at your local park for support and the FCC challenges. **Be a kid again!** *Listen to the advice on the poster to move forward slowly at your own pace.

You can also download the poster below and take advantage of the fall to build the habit of Walkabout. (Or if you can't go out, the exercises could easily be adapted to an indoor setting and combined with walking on the spot or moving to music.)

Regards,

Bea

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Day 15: Let's Get Moving

Hello!

During this last week of the BrainyActive Challenge, we will look at some resources to help us keep moving, even after the 21-day Challenge. Let us think about ways to personalize our activity regime that is fun and challenging but also safe for our body type.

Today's **First Commercial Challenge FCC**, the **Hamstring Stretch**, will look at one crucial safety tip. **Keep the back straight – bend at the hips, not the waist.**

Day 15 FCC: Hamstring Stretch

Unsafe



Unsafe



The traditional hamstring stretch involves curvature (flexion) of the spine which creates a potential risk for vertebral fracture. We will also discuss this further on Saturday.

The safe standing hamstring stretch starts with one leg extended and the toe pointing up. You can hold onto your chair (or the park bench). Bend the standing leg and push the hip of the extended leg back until you feel a stretch in the back of your leg. Keep the back straight and bend at the hip to increase the stretch. You should feel a little tension but not pain.

Modification: Sit upright near the front of your chair, extend one leg in front of you, toe pointing towards the ceiling. Place your hands on your extended thigh gently without applying pressure on your leg. With a straight back, slowly bend forward at the hips.

Other Option: Move to the front of your chair extend one leg.

Graphics from: Melioguide, Moveforlife, Melioguide and Winnipeginmotion

[Day 15 FCC](#)

The Ottawa Public Health website below asks us, “What will you do for your brain today?” If we hear the “**Be Active**” section in the link, it gives us some fun ideas and challenges us, asking, “*will you start being more active?*”

To help us answer this question with a YES, there is a list of links to local and Canadian resources. The *Ottawa Public Health – We All Need to Move More* link has some interesting ideas, motivational videos and more links. I particularly like the 23 and ½ hours video.

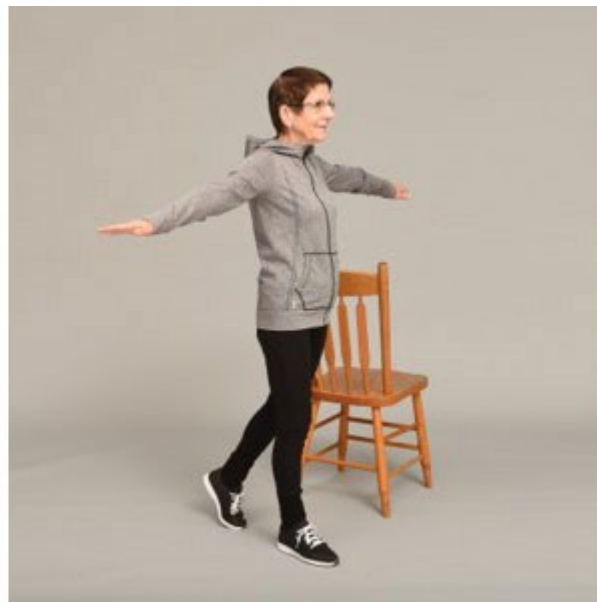
Our destination today is the ***tips to get moving*** link. You will recognize some of these tips from previous emails. We will follow up on the others this week. But today, we want to think about **setting realistic physical activity goals and making a plan to reach these goals**. Jot down the things that work for you, your situation and your body. We will revisit this question on day 21.

[Brain Health](#)

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Day 16: Let's Get Moving

Day 16 FCC: Walk the line



1. Stand up tall near a wall or counter and look ahead.
2. Place one foot directly in front of the other to form a straight line.
3. Step forward, walking in a straight line.
4. Repeat 10 or more steps.
5. Turn around and repeat the exercise.

Modification: between two supports (two chairs or chair and counter) walk one step forward and one step back.

From:BSBB

Finally, here are the two main exercise sheets that we have been working through in the **First Commercial Challenges FCCs**.

The Home Support Exercise Program (**HSEP**) is an evidence-based set of exercises produced by the Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging at the University of Western Ontario. It includes cardio activity, and strength and

stretch exercises- making it a full workout while providing progressions. It comes with a bilingual daily log as an added incentive to stay on track.

The Better Strength Better Balance (**BSBB**) chart looks easy but trusts me if you practice the whole chart at maximum repetitions and without holding on or putting your foot down between reps, it can challenge even the elite athlete.

Safety Tip: Be sure to read the preamble and warm up before the session and stretch after! If you don't have time to complete the whole chart in a day, try a different activity each day. When doing strength and balance exercises, focus on what you are doing: on form, breathing and listening to your body.

However, if the FCC has become an easy way to fit fitness into your routine, I suggest doing them during "The News". **Remember that something is always better than nothing!**

Be sure to download these charts (and the HSEP log) at the buttons below.

[Home Support Exercise Program](#)

[Strength and balance Exercise](#)

[HSEP Log](#)

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Day 17: Let's Get Moving

We need to avoid injury to continue to be BrainyActive! Balance is a key component to remaining injury free during activity. Today's **First Commercial Challenge FCC** is brought to us by "Too Fit To Fracture" from Osteoporosis Canada. Starting with an active posture, we can choose a balance challenge from the list or make one of our own.

Day 17 FCC: Posture & Balance



1. Stand with good posture while holding a sturdy chair. Imagine your torso is a box.
2. Your shoulders and hips are the corners. Keep the torso box straight.
3. Place the back of your right heel in front of the toes of your left foot.
4. Put only two fingers on the chair
5. Do it without holding onto the support object.
6. Do it with your eyes closed.
7. Do another activity or mental challenge while balancing: like counting back from 100 by 7s.

Balance In Motion: Stand with good posture and look straight. Get on your toes and then walk on your toes. Lower your heels to the ground so you can turn around safely to walk back to your starting position.

Modification: Stand between two supports- two sturdy chairs or the counter and a chair. Shift your weight from one leg to the other. Progress slowly to raising one foot off the ground.

Before we dive into all the great fitness classes available on the web or take up a completely new activity to challenge the brain, I wanted to talk about the exercises to avoid (or do with great care and body awareness). Bone health is one of the main factors to consider while looking at safety. The Too Fit to Fracture Program and booklet is a good source to start. Margret Martin's site Melioguide is another great resource for safe exercise routines and advice. You can access both of these below.

Bone health: After the age of 40, we lose 0.5% to 1% of the bone mass in our skeleton each year. Osteoporosis affects about 1.4 million Canadians. At least **1 in 3 women and 1 in 5 men** will suffer from an osteoporotic fracture during their lifetime. But even more important for our discussion is that Osteoporosis is often called the 'silent thief' because bone loss occurs without symptoms unless one has fractured. In my opinion, it seems wise for older adults to assume that low bone density is a factor to consider when performing any activity. For both, older and younger adults, building bone needs to be an integral part of staying physically active for brain health.

Avoid completely

Crunches, sit-ups, toe touches and any form of forward-bending (FCC Day 15) should be completely avoided for older adults. And there are prominent back health experts, such as Dr. Stuart McGill, who say crunches should be avoided at all ages.

Twisting (rotating) the spine that is forceful or repetitive – like twisting during aerobics or with weights should be avoided. Particularly dangerous is forward bending with a twist.

Do with caution

Side bending is where the spine bends compacting the discs and **scrunching the vertebrae**. Extreme external rotation of the hip, particularly if repetitive or forceful as in some aerobic moves and some gym apparatus.

But remember that the bottom line is always listening to your body but also being aware that it may not always tell you everything you need to know until it is too late.

[Too Fit to Fracture](#)

[Melioguide](#)

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Day 18: Let's Get Moving

I am excited today to introduce you to Winnipeg in Motion. Quoting their website, "Whether you are 2 or 102, we hope this site will provide you with tips & tools to add more physical activity to your day." Our **First Commercial Challenge FCC** is a screen capture from their "*in motion* Older Adult Exercise DVD."

Day 18 FCC: Leg Extensions



1. First, establish perfect posture. (You can use a chair for support)
2. Engage the abdominals.
3. Lift the knee.
4. Extend the leg. Hold for a count of 2 if possible.
5. Bend the knee and lower the leg.
6. Do multiple repetitions on one leg and then switch legs.

Progression: If you want to increase the difficulty level, don't put your foot on the floor between repetitions

Modification: Do the exercise from a seated position. Make sure to sit up straight with shoulders back and abdominals engaged.

The Winnipeg in Motion site has something for everyone. Today we will focus on the '*in motion* Older Adult Exercise DVD' available in English and French both as a DVD and as videos on their YouTube channel. (see link below). You can choose to play the whole workout or just one of the components- warm-up, cardio, strength and balance or cool down. The website also gives a lot of modifications and progressions. The **how-to** section focuses on techniques and forms for individual exercises.

[Winnipeg in Motion](#)

To proceed with today's exercise video, you might want to download the activity tracker (see below). The site offers many internal and external links and posters. Tomorrow, we will have fun with one of the posters but for today, I leave you with a tip and a smile.

Tip: Bookmark the Winnipeg in motion website and the next time you are tempted to go down the world news wormhole, click on the Winnipeg in motion link instead and see what other things you can find to inspire you – there is something for all ages.

Activity Tracker

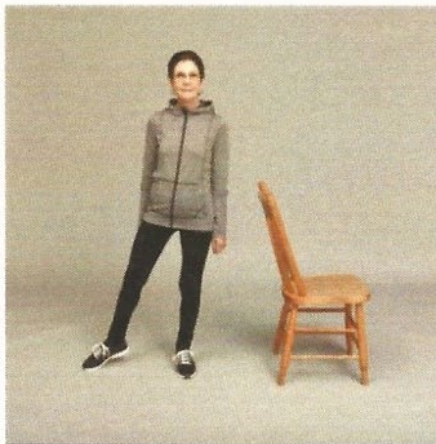
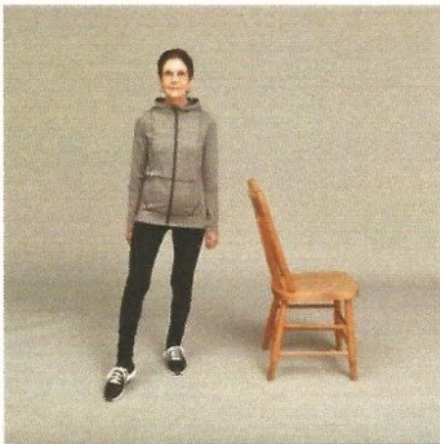
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Day 19: Let's Get Moving

Let's spice things up by mixing a few exercises today! One way to stay motivated after the BrainyActive challenge is to try something new. It can be something small like using new equipment (if available), making up a new exercise routine, a dance music playlist or as big as learning a new activity.

Today's **First Commercial Challenge FCC** comes from the old version of the BSBB poster and can be made into a brain challenge when done with a buddy.

Day 19 FCC: Around the Clock



- Stand on the left leg, with the knee of the support leg slightly bent.
- Tap the right toe around an imaginary clock from 1 to 6.
- Stand on the right leg, and tap your left toe from 11 to 6.

Progression: Don't let your foot touch the ground- just point your toe in that direction.

Fun: Do it with a buddy and take turns calling out a time to point to.

Modification: move to the front of the chair and tap toe from 1 to 3 and then 11 to 9.

Can't explain it any better than the Mixing it up poster from Winnipeg in motion. Variety keeps your body (and mind) strong. Download the poster to know **why**.

Mixing it up Poster

The poster goes on to provide tips for success and make some fun suggestions for new activities. These may seem a bit out of reach, particularly in these days of social distancing, but small changes can still make a big difference. For instance, take a different route on your walk or if that isn't possible, try walking around the

opposite way and notice how different the buildings/scenery look from the other side. We can start small and work up to something new that we have always wanted to try.

Dare to dream!

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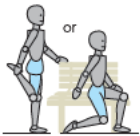
Day 20: Let's Get Moving

Hello,

Let's get active with TV!

Getting active by taking part in a TV exercise program at the same time every day is a great way to build a routine, keep motivated and stay committed. We will look at what Rogers has for us and venture into YouTube today. But first, let us practice one last stretch for today's **First Commercial Challenge (FCC)**. This time we're aiming for Quads and psoas.

Day 20 FCC: Quad Stretch



- Stand and touch the wall or a chair /bench.
- Grasp the top of your ankle, your pant leg or the back of your shoe and pull it gently towards your buttocks.
- Straighten your hip by moving your knee backwards.
- The bent knee should be even with or behind the straight leg knee. This is more important than how close the foot is to the buttocks.
- Keep your head and shoulders upright.

Progression: Once you have perfected the stretch, hold onto a supporting experiment by taking the hand off the support.

Modification: Turn to sit sideways on your chair. Take the leg on the outside to the back (as far as possible) with the toe stretched backwards. Push your hip forward to get a gentle stretch in the front of the leg (quads).

Rogers and the BSBB program teamed up to produce a TV series broadcast twice daily at 7:00 AM and 12 PM on Rogers TV. Anita Findlay, one of Ottawa's premier fitness instructors, is joined each class by a participant in the BSBB program. These classes are also available as on-demand videos if the times don't work for you but committing to move at the same time every day is a great way to stay active as we move forward. See the link below.

[Better Strength Better Balance](#)

If you want to branch out from these local resources, there are thousands of free exercise videos on YouTube. For instance, check out *Fabulous 50s*, *Get Fit with Rick* and *Fitness Blender* or if you have an Amazon Prime

or Craftsy Premium membership, they also offer free fitness classes. But remember, always **be your safety monitor! Listen to your body!**

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Day 21: Let's Get Moving

Congratulations!! You made it to day 21

Now how do we stay motivated to keep moving. Did you think of some attainable goals? Maybe joining a class or group might be just the thing. But first, let's see if our balance tricks and FCCs have paid off. Today we will re-test our balance for the last **First Commercial Challenge FCC**. Hope you keep them up!

Day 21 FCC: Balance re-testing



- Stand behind or beside your chair.
- Lift one leg in any comfortable way.
- Find a spot on the floor or wall in front of you to focus on – it should allow you to maintain good posture.
- Start your timer and try lifting your hand off the chair and time how long you can keep balancing without touching the chair - up to 60 seconds.
- Compare to your time on day 3.

Modification: If you cannot take your hand off the support yet, notice if your standing leg feels stronger than the Day 3 FCC and be patient. Each day you practice, you will get closer to your goal.

Joining a group fitness class or a sports group is a wonderful way to stay active as well as socialize. You can register for the City of Ottawa Recreation fall classes ([link below](#)) or my Get Moving Virtual Classes ([link below](#)) to stay fit and motivated this fall.

Some community centres and groups also offer in-person classes.

Live online classes are a great way to participate in a group. Many virtual classes that started at the height of the pandemic are still offered and are a great option if you're not comfortable working out, playing in an in-person environment or when you can't leave home. These virtual classes will also be a blessing on those snowstorm days! You can also look for virtual options at your nearest fitness clubs. Societies like The Dementia Society and Dancing with Parkinson's offer live zoom events and classes for their participants. (see links below).

[Dancing with Parkinson's](#)

[The Dementia Society Activities](#)

Be it an in-person or a virtual class, having a scheduled time and people to share with makes it easier to stay committed and keep moving.

So now it is time to set some attainable goals for the months ahead. Look back at the possibilities we have talked about over these 21 days. Try writing down your sustainable goals or even better, share them with your exercise buddy. You can use The City of Ottawa **Walking Log** or the **ParticipAction Movement log** to record your goals and then track your progress.

One final note: Recent research suggests that even after short bouts of moderate-intensity activity like brisk walking- **we think better**. So remember- **any activity is better than none** and the best time, place and type of exercise for each of us is the one we do.

I enjoyed playing our First Commercial Challenge game with you. I hope the FCC continues to get you out of your chair in the months ahead.

Thank you for participating in the BrainyActive Challenge – let's keep moving together!

[Walking Logs](#)

[ParticipACTION Log](#)

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