

# To be active at home, take your Daily Dose!

By John Griffin, MSc

**M**any of us struggle to be physically active on a regular basis. Exercise—particularly starting an activity program—challenges people to change their behavior, and that's hard. More than half the attempts to begin exercise programs lapse within a few months.

One approach to this problem is to structure exercise right into our lifestyle. When we think about exercise as an integrated part of daily life, it stops being an add-on. Instead, it complements what we do every day.

Most days, people complete a series of routine tasks. Some of these we may enjoy, like reading the paper. Others are routine jobs, like sweeping a floor or brushing our teeth.

Daily active living simply enhances simple activities in a daily routine. It can complement a daily exercise program or replace it from time to time.

It's about making active choices that become a way of life. Here are some examples:

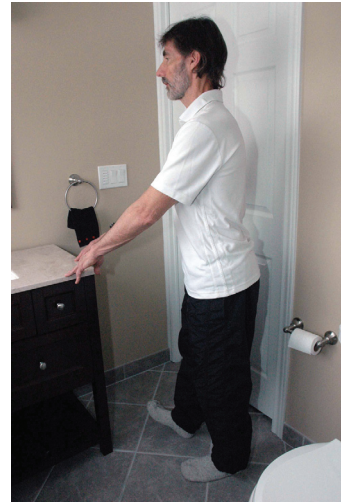
- walking to the store instead of taking the car
- climbing stairs instead of riding the elevator
- active playing with grandkids
- taking on a more vigorous chore for the day

In addition to incorporating active living into your life, you can also consider adding in a little 'daily dose routine'. Daily dose routines are mini movement routines that you can do at the same time as certain activities you do every day.

Be sure to consult with a physician, physical therapist, or other trained health or exercise professional before doing a new exercise routine, in case you have medical and physical conditions that affect the exercises and how they are applied.

## Lower Body Daily Dose

You can do these 5 routines whenever you brush your teeth. Eventually, just going into the bathroom will cue you to do the exercises. Use the edge of the sink for balance and support.



### Toe or foot lifts

1. Stand with your legs apart and knees slightly bent.
2. Keeping your heel on the floor, slowly lift your right foot up.
3. Return your foot to the floor.
4. Repeat the exercise, alternating feet.



### Knee-up hip roll

1. Stand with your legs together.
2. Lift your right knee up in front of you.
3. Slowly swing your leg out to the side, moving from the hip. Keep your knee bent and pointing out to the side.
4. With your knee still bent, slowly return your leg to the front.
5. Lower your leg to the starting position.
6. Repeat the exercise, alternating legs.



### Side-leg lifts

1. Stand tall with your legs apart and knees slightly bent.
2. Moving from the hip, lift your right leg slowly out to the side.
3. Slowly bring your leg back to the starting position.
4. Repeat the exercise, alternating legs

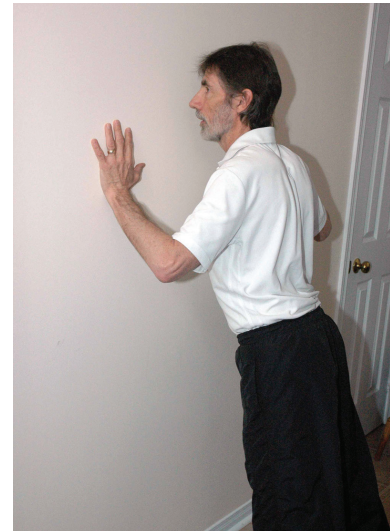


### Partial squats

1. Stand tall with your legs apart
2. Bend your knees and slowly lower yourself as if you were about to sit in a chair.
3. Slowly straighten up.
4. Repeat.

## Upper Body Daily Dose

This series of exercises, will work your upper body. The exercises in these routines are designed to improve your flexibility, muscular endurance, strength, joint stability, and balance. This mini-routine is associated with getting dressed/undressed in your bedroom. One set equals performing an exercise for the number of counts specified. Do 3 sets per day.



### Hamstring curls

1. Stand straight with your legs apart and knees slightly bent.
2. Slowly lift your right heel up behind you.
3. Lower your foot back to the ground.
4. Repeat the exercise, alternating legs.

### Wall Push-Up

1. Stand upright, place your hands on the wall at shoulder height, with your feet about 24" from the wall.
2. Slowly lower your forehead to the wall, then return to the starting position.
3. Complete this exercise 10 times.

#### About the author:

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### ***"Stick-'Em-Up" Pull Back***

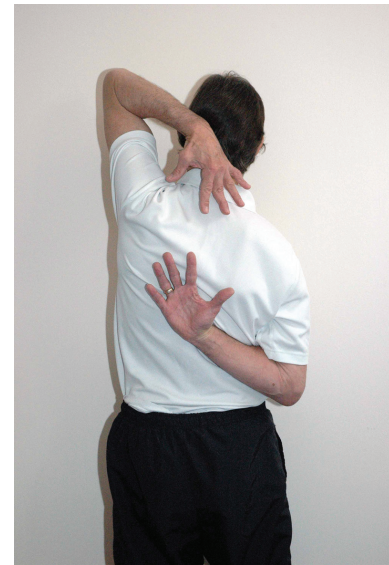
Pretend you are the victim of a "stickup," or robbery.

1. Raise your arms to shoulder height, elbows bent, hands open and palms facing out.
2. Slowly pull your shoulder blades back and together, then return your shoulders to a forward position.
3. Perform this exercise 10 times.



### ***Tight-Grip Shoulder Circle***

1. Stand tall, raise your arms to shoulder height, make a tight fist with each hand.
2. Do 10 large, comfortable circles with your arms moving forward.
3. Do 10 large, comfortable circles with your arms moving backward.
4. Don't forget to breathe!



### ***Back Scratch Stretch***

1. Stand upright, put your right hand over your right shoulder and place your other hand behind your waist.
2. Gently try to bring your hands closer together.
3. Hold for 15 seconds.
4. Complete this exercise twice on each side, alternate arms.



### ***Single-Arm Wall Stretch***

1. With a straight arm, put your right hand on the wall at shoulder height.
2. Slowly turn your body away from the wall to gently stretch the chest.
3. Hold for 15 seconds.
4. Alternate arms, perform this exercise twice on each side.

# Trunk and Core Daily Dose

This daily dose routine is linked to relaxing on the bed or sofa (commercial time, if you are watching TV!) For added stability, you may prefer to do these exercises on the floor, if you can get down on the floor and up again easily. One set equals performing an exercise for the number of counts specified. Do 3 sets per day.



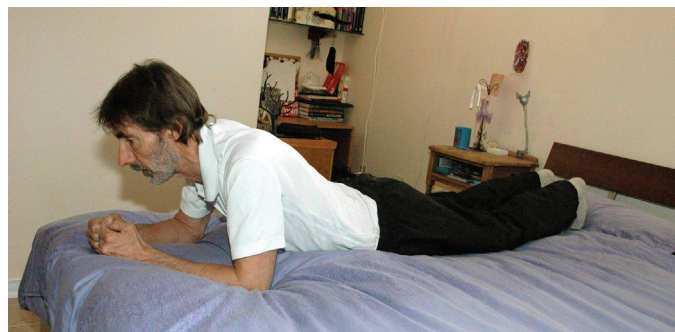
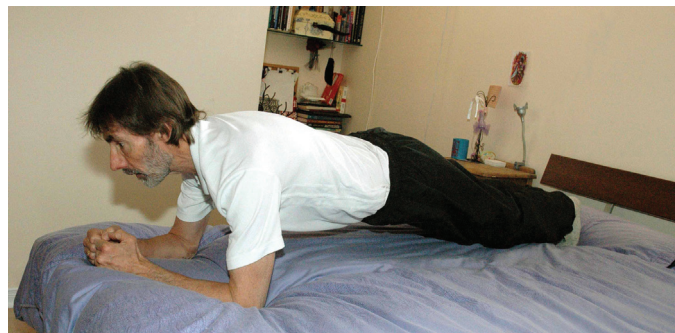
## Hip Bridge Lift

1. Lie with your knees bent and stomach pulled in.
2. Tighten the muscles in your buttocks and slowly lift your hips, keeping your heels and shoulders on the sofa or bed.
3. Slowly return to the starting position.
4. Perform this exercise 5 times.



## Knee-to-Chest Stretch

1. Lie down with your stomach pulled in, slowly bring your right knee up and pull it gently toward your chest.
2. Hold for 15 seconds.
3. Slowly lower your knee to the starting position.
4. Alternating legs, do this exercise twice on each side.



## Bent Elbow Push-Up

1. Lie face down and place your forearms flat under your shoulders.
2. Slowly lift your trunk up, keeping your forearms on the sofa or bed, and hold for a few seconds at the top (A).
3. Lower yourself slowly to the starting position (B).
4. Do this movement 5 times.



## Bent Knee Lowers

1. Lie on a bed or sofa and lift your right leg up with your knee bent to a 90° angle.
2. Slowly lower your leg while straightening your knee. Be sure to keep your stomach muscles pulled in tight throughout the movement.
3. Alternating legs, complete this exercise 5 times on each side.