



# 10 CHAIR EXERCISES FOR SENIORS

A COMPREHENSIVE  
VISUAL GUIDE



YMCA OF GREATER  
NEW YORK  
Where there's a Y,  
there's a way.



### BEFORE YOU BEGIN, PLEASE TAKE NOTE:

- You should always consult a physician prior to starting an exercise routine to ensure that you are medically cleared to exercise.
- Identify enough safe space to exercise.
- It is recommended that you wear athletic footwear. Do not wear flip flops, slippers, or shoes that may be a trip hazard.
- Have a bottle/cup of water ready and easily accessible.
- A chair may be utilized in all the exercises for extra support. It should ideally be armless and please make sure it is stable and will not slide around on the floor.
- If at any point, you feel any discomfort, lightheadedness/dizziness, or pain – please stop exercising and consult a physician before resuming exercise.

### EXERCISE 1:

#### BODYWEIGHT CHAIR-ASSISTED SQUAT

- Stand behind chair facing the chair's back. Place feet shoulder-width apart with toes pointed forward.
- Stand tall, tuck chin behind your chest, retract shoulders, and lengthen your neck and spine. Hands should be on the back of the chair for support.
- Hinge hips back like you are going to sit down — hips will bend first; knees will bend second.
- Bend hips and knees into a squatting position that does not exceed 90 degrees; knees should also remain behind the toes.
- Return to starting position by pressing through the heels.
- 8-12 repetitions then rest with water break.



## EXERCISE 2

### BODYWEIGHT CHAIR-ASSISTED REVERSE LUNGE

- Stand behind chair facing the chair's back. Place feet shoulder-width apart with toes pointed forward.
- Stand tall, tuck chin behind your chest, retract shoulders, and lengthen your neck and spine. Hands should be on the back of the chair for support.
- Pick up right foot from the floor, extend the hip, and reach toe back until it touches the floor.
- Bend left knee no further than 90 degrees and enter a comfortable lunge position.
- With the left leg, press through the heel to straighten the knee and return to starting position.
- Complete exercise on both legs.
- 8-12 repetitions then rest with water break.



### **EXERCISE 3:** **BODYWEIGHT CHAIR-ASSISTED HIP ABDUCTION**

- Stand behind chair facing the chair's back. Place feet shoulder-width apart with toes pointed forward.
- Stand tall, tuck chin behind your chest, retract shoulders, and lengthen your neck and spine. Hands should be on the back of the chair for support.
- Pick left foot up off the ground while keeping the leg straight, keep weight on the right leg.
- Keep hips facing forward and raise left foot out to the side, keeping toes facing forward with a slight pause at the top of your range of motion.
- Slowly bring left leg back to starting position.
- Complete exercise on both legs.
- 8-12 repetitions then rest with water break.



#### **EXERCISE 4: SEATED CRUNCH**

- In a seated position, place feet shoulder-width apart with toes pointed forward.
- Sit tall, tuck chin behind your chest, retract shoulders, and lengthen your neck and spine. Place hands by your ears; do not lace fingers behind your head or neck
- Keeping the hips and shoulders stable, use your core to move your shoulders towards your knees.
- Tuck your belly button back to the spine and return to the starting position — be sure to sit nice and tall between repetitions.
- 8-12 repetitions then rest with water break.



## EXERCISE 5: SEATED BICYCLE CRUNCH

- In a seated position, place feet shoulder-width apart with toes pointed forward.
- Sit tall, tuck chin behind your chest, retract shoulders, and lengthen your neck and spine. Place hands by your ears; do not lace fingers behind your head or neck.
- Pick your left foot up off the ground by raising your thigh off the chair.
- Keeping the hips and shoulders stable, use your core to move your right elbow toward your raised knee.
- Tuck your belly button back to the spine and return to the starting position — be sure to sit nice and tall between repetitions.
- Exercise should be completed on both sides.
- 8-12 repetitions then rest with water break.



## EXERCISE 6: TOE-TAP + BICEP CURL

- In a seated position, sit tall, shoulders relaxed down, and lengthen your neck and spine. Feet are shoulder-width apart with toes pointed forward; arms should be hanging down to your sides with palms facing forward.
- Pick left thigh up from the chair and reach foot forward, touch your toe to the floor in front of you.
- Keeping elbows close to your sides, bend both elbows, and bring hands toward your shoulders.
- Return left foot and arms to their starting positions, repeat, and switch feet.
- Exercise should be completed on both sides.
- 8-12 repetitions then rest with water break.



## **EXERCISE 7:** **HEEL TAP + OVERHEAD PRESS**

- In a seated position, sit tall, lengthen your neck and spine. Feet shoulder-width apart with toes pointed forward; shoulders and elbows should be bent at 90-degree angles.
- Pick left thigh up from the chair and reach foot forward, touch your heel to the floor in front of you.
- Keeping your good posture, press hands overhead.
- Return left foot and arms to their starting positions, repeat, and switch feet.
- Exercise should be completed on both sides.
- 8-12 repetitions then rest with water break.





## **EXERCISE 8:** **ARM CIRCLES WITH OR WITHOUT MARCHING (SEATED/STANDING)**

- In a seated position, sit tall, lengthen your neck and spine. Feet shoulder-width apart with toes pointed forward; shoulders and elbows should be extended out like an airplane.
- Alternating, march both feet in place on the floor in front of you.
- Keeping your good posture, circle arms in a clockwise motion (backward).
- Repeat the exercise and circle arms counterclockwise (forward).
- Exercise should be completed in both directions.
- 8-12 repetitions then rest with water break.



## EXERCISE 9: SEATED CAT TO COW

- In a seated position, place feet shoulder-width apart with toes pointed forward; hands should be resting on your knees.
- Using only your torso extend your spine and press your chest toward the ceiling, retract your shoulder blades, and squeeze (as if holding a pencil with your shoulder blades) (Cow).
- Slowly roll your spine and shoulders forward (Cat).
- Return to starting position and repeat.
- 8-12 repetitions then rest with water break.



## EXERCISE 10: Y-T-As

- In a seated position, sit tall, lengthen your neck and spine. Feet shoulder-width apart with toes pointed forward; shoulders and elbows should be extended out like an airplane with palms facing the ceiling.
- Keeping your good posture, reach arms overhead in the Y-position; arms should be slightly in front of the body.
- Keeping your good posture, extend arms out to the T-position; arms should be aligned with the rest of your body.
- Keeping your good posture, reach arms back to the A-position; arms should be slightly behind the body; retract and squeeze shoulder blades (as if holding a pencil with your shoulder blades); make sure you are sitting tall and shoulders are not scrunched up by your ears.
- Reverse order and repeat.
- 8-12 repetitions then rest with water break.