

Exercise-therapy is considered first-line treatment for **ALL** people with knee osteoarthritis. Visit our '[exercise-therapy](#)' section of our online toolkit to learn more.

The following pages in this guide are designed to help you either start or improve your current exercise-therapy routine. There are no absolute right and wrong exercises to perform, however we have provided you with a program of 8 exercises with progressions to try. You may need some additional inexpensive equipment like an exercise band.

Use the resources provided in this guide to keep track of the following:

1. What level of exercise you performed  
You should aim for the level that you are able to complete safely but find most challenging
2. The total number of 'reps' performed
3. If you experienced any pain or discomfort during or after the session

View video's of all of our exercises on our sample program page in the resource library section of our online toolkit or click [here](#)

We recommend the following for  
ALL exercises

Perform the program twice a week  
10-15 'repetitions (reps) of each  
exercise

2-3 'sets' of each exercise

Remember to perform exercises on both legs  
if they are single leg exercises

Resting for 60 seconds between  
'sets'



### Level 1

- Lie on your back, calves on top of the gym ball
- Lift your hips off the floor and push your hips towards the ceiling
- Tighten your abdominals and buttocks
- Keep your shoulder, hip, knee and foot aligned
- Extend hips only until in line with shoulder



### Level 2

- Lie on your back, calves on top of the gym ball, and arms across your chest
- Lift your hips off the floor and push your hips towards the ceiling
- Tighten your abdominals and buttocks
- Keep your shoulder, hip, knee and foot aligned
- Extend hips only until in line with shoulder



### Level 3

- Lie on your back, one calf on top of the gym ball and arms by your side
- Lift your hips off the floor and push your hips towards the ceiling
- Tighten your abdominals and buttocks
- Keep your shoulder, hip, knee and foot aligned
- Extend hips only until in line with shoulder

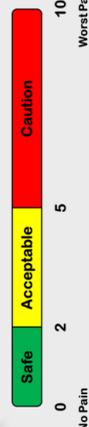


WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
1 <sup>st</sup> Session Level							
1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Reps							
WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level							
1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Reps							

Optional continuation of program

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
1 <sup>st</sup> Session Level							
1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Reps							
WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level							
1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Reps							

Use this scale to guide acceptable pain levels



- 1 Ideally keep pain < 2/10 during your activities if possible
- 2 Do not exceed 5/10 pain during exercise
- 3 Pain should return to normal levels 60 minutes post-exercise
- 4 Pain should not be increased the following morning post-exercise
- 5 Do your physical activities based on your pain response

These numbers will help you as a guide, however, it may vary from person to person.



### Level 1

- Lie on your back, calves on top of the gym ball or chair and arms by your side
- Roll your shoulder blades up and lower yourself back down after a short pause
- Lift your head first, then your shoulders
- Pulling your chin to look at your stomach
- Press your lower back into the floor



### Level 2

- Lie on your back, calves on top of the gym ball or chair and arms crossed on your chest
- Roll your shoulder blades up and lower yourself back down after a short pause
- Lift your head first, then your shoulders
- Pulling your chin to look at your stomach
- Press your lower back into the floor



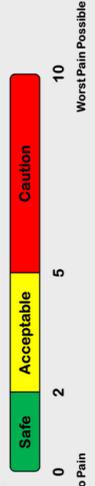
### Level 3

- Lie on your back, calves on top of the gym ball or chair and hands behind your neck
- Roll your shoulder blades up and lower yourself back down after a short pause
- Lift your head first, then your shoulders
- Pulling your chin to look at your stomach
- Press your lower back into the floor

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
1 <sup>st</sup> Session Level							
1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Reps							
WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level							
1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Reps							

Optional continuation of program

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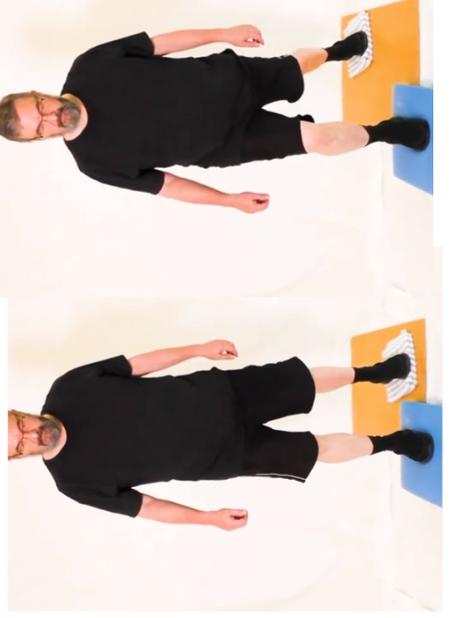
### Level 1

- Stand weight-bearing on one leg with the other leg on a sliding surface
- Slide backwards to forwards with the standing leg
- Bend and extend the knee on the weight-bearing leg
- Keep the shoulder, hip, knee and foot aligned



### Level 2

- Stand weight-bearing on one leg with the other leg on an uneven surface (e.g. foam pillow, thick mattress)
- Other leg on a sliding surface
- Slide backwards to forwards with the standing leg
- Bend and extend the knee on the weight-bearing leg
- Keep the shoulder, hip, knee and foot aligned



### Level 3

- Start in a standing position
- Take a large step forward then return
- Initially use a hand support for balance if needed
- Keep the shoulder, hip, knee and foot aligned



WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
1 <sup>st</sup> Session Level							
1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Reps							
WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level							
1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Reps							

Optional continuation of program

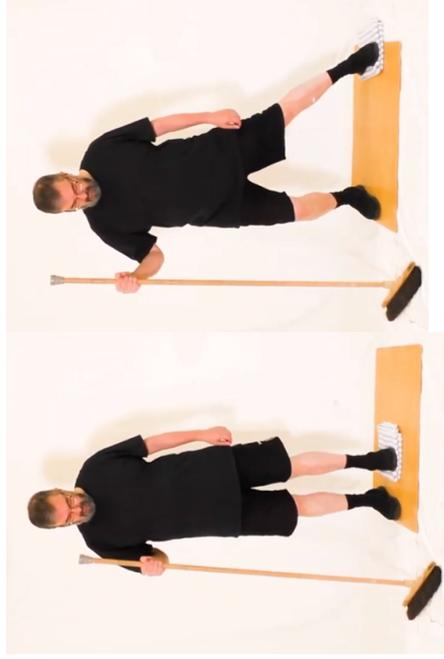
WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
1 <sup>st</sup> Session Level							
1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Reps							
WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level							
1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Reps							

**Use this scale to guide acceptable pain levels**

0	2	5	10
No Pain	Safe	Acceptable	Caution
			Worst Pain Possible

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These numbers will help you as a guide, however, it may vary from person to person.



### Level 1

- Stand weight-bearing on one leg with the other leg on a sliding surface
- Slide sideways with the standing leg
- Bend and extend the knee on the weight-bearing leg
- Keep the shoulder, hip, knee and foot aligned



### Level 2

- Stand weight-bearing on one leg with the other leg on an uneven surface (e.g. foam pillow, thick mattress)
- Other leg on a sliding surface
- Slide sideways with the standing leg
- Bend and extend the knee on the weight-bearing leg
- Keep the shoulder, hip, knee and foot aligned



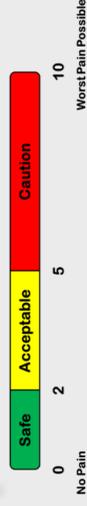
### Level 3

- Start in a standing position
- Take a large step sideways then return
- Initially use a hand support for balance if needed
- Keep the shoulder, hip, knee and foot aligned

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
1 <sup>st</sup> Session Level							
1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Reps							
WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level							
1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Reps							

Optional continuation of program

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## Knee flexion

- Sit in a chair
- Attach the resistance band to something sturdy
- Pull the resistance band backward by bending your knee
- Make sure there is tension on the resistance band in the rest position
- Progress the exercise by increasing the level of resistance band

## Knee extension

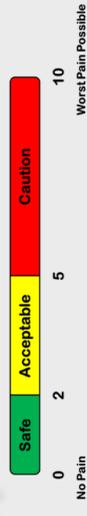
- Sit in a chair
- Attach the resistance band to the back leg of the chair
- Pull the resistance band forward by straightening your knee
- Make sure there is tension on the resistance band in the rest position
- Progress the exercise by increasing the level of resistance band

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6
1 <sup>st</sup> Session Level						
Knee flexion reps						
Knee extension reps						
WEEK 1 2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level	WEEK 2 2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level	WEEK 3 2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level	WEEK 4 2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level	WEEK 5 2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level	WEEK 6 2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level	WEEK 6 2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level
Knee flexion reps						
Knee extension reps						

Optional continuation of program

	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
1 <sup>st</sup> Session Level	1 <sup>st</sup> Session Level	1 <sup>st</sup> Session Level
Knee flexion reps	Knee flexion reps	Knee flexion reps
Knee extension reps	Knee extension reps	Knee extension reps
WEEK 7 2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level	WEEK 7 2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level	WEEK 8 2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level
Knee flexion reps	Knee flexion reps	Knee flexion reps
Knee extension reps	Knee extension reps	Knee extension reps

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## Hip abduction

- Start in a stand position
- Attach the resistance band to something sturdy
- Lift your outer leg up and straight out to the side as far as possible
- Make sure there is tension on the resistance band in the rest position
- Keep your body straight and toes pointing forward
- Progress the exercise by increasing the level of resistance band



## Hip adduction

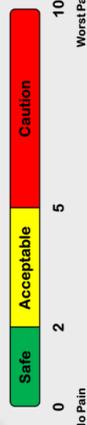
- Stand in one leg position
- Attach the resistance band to something sturdy
- Pull your leg in towards the weight-bearing leg against the resistance of the band
- Make sure there is tension on the resistance band in the rest position
- Keep your body straight and toes pointing forward
- Progress the exercise by increasing the level of resistance band

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6
1 <sup>st</sup> Session Level					
Hip abduction reps					
Hip adduction reps					
2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level					
Hip abduction reps					
Hip adduction reps					

Optional continuation of program

WEEK 7	WEEK 8
1 <sup>st</sup> Session Level	1 <sup>st</sup> Session Level
Hip abduction reps	Hip abduction reps
Hip adduction reps	Hip adduction reps
2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level	2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level
Hip abduction reps	Hip abduction reps
Hip adduction reps	Hip adduction reps

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### Level 1

- Start seated with feet parallel
- You can use slight hand support to stand up and down
- Keep your body straight, kneecaps over your feet and toes pointing forwards
- Make sure your weight is equally distributed over your right and left legs



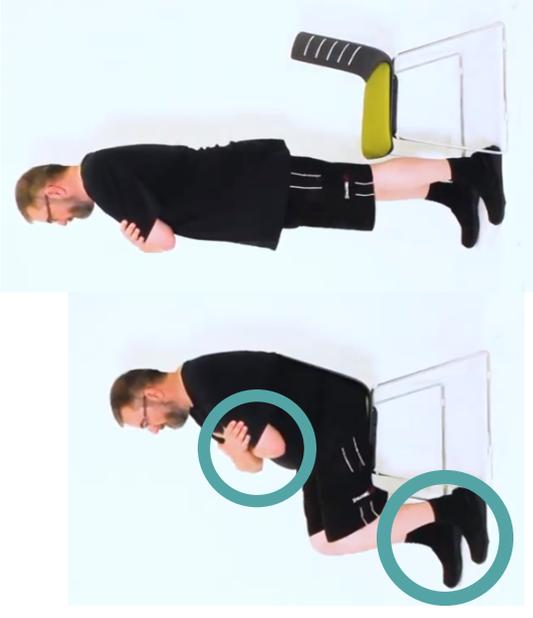
### Level 2

- Start seated with feet parallel
- Stand up and down without hand support
- Keep your body straight, kneecaps over your feet and toes pointing forwards
- Make sure your weight is equally distributed over your right and left legs



### Level 3

- Start seated with one foot in front of the other and arms crossed on your chest
- Stand up and down without arm support
- Keep your body straight, kneecaps over your feet and toes pointing forwards



**WEEK 1**  
1<sup>st</sup> Session  
Level

1 2 3  
Reps

**WEEK 2**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
Level

1 2 3  
Reps

**WEEK 3**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
Level

1 2 3  
Reps

**WEEK 4**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
Level

1 2 3  
Reps

**WEEK 5**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
Level

1 2 3  
Reps

**WEEK 6**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
Level

1 2 3  
Reps

**WEEK 7**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
Level

1 2 3  
Reps

**WEEK 8**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
Level

1 2 3  
Reps

Optional continuation of program

**WEEK 1**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
Level

1 2 3  
Reps

**WEEK 2**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
Level

1 2 3  
Reps

**WEEK 3**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
Level

1 2 3  
Reps

**WEEK 4**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
Level

1 2 3  
Reps

**WEEK 5**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
Level

1 2 3  
Reps

**WEEK 6**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
Level

1 2 3  
Reps

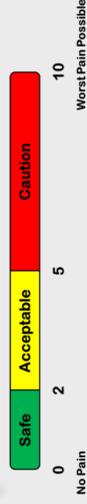
**WEEK 7**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
Level

1 2 3  
Reps

**WEEK 8**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Session  
Level

1 2 3  
Reps

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### Level 1

- Start with one foot on the step
- Step up onto the step and then step back down behind you
- Use a hand support for balance if needed
- Keep your body straight, kneecaps in line with your foot and your toes pointing forward



### Level 2

- Start with one foot on the step
- Step up onto the step and then step back down behind you without support
- Keep your body straight, kneecaps in line with your foot and your toes pointing forward



### Level 3

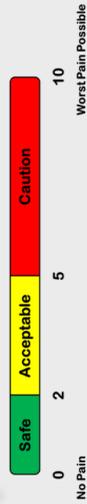
- Start with one foot on the step
- Add extra weight
- Step up onto the step and then step back down behind you without support
- Keep your body straight, kneecaps in line with your foot and your toes pointing forward



WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
1 <sup>st</sup> Session Level							
1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Reps							
WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
2 <sup>nd</sup> Session Level							
1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
Reps							

Optional continuation of program

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