

From soup cans to laundry lunges: At-home exercises that everyone can do

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Looking for ways to get creative with your physical activity? The Mayo Clinic Healthy Living Program has some great ideas for you! Whether you are new to exercise or a seasoned veteran of the exercise world, we can all use a little more activity in our day. Here's a list of creative ways to build exercise into your daily life, especially when you're stuck indoors.

STAIRS

Go up them, go down them, jump up and down them, go forward, go backward, and even go sideways! It sounds like the start of a Dr. Seuss book, but it's not – instead, it's a shout-out to the many ways you can use stairs to get an amazing cardiovascular and strength training workout. You can also use them in a circuit training routine with body weight exercises like squats, lunges, push-ups, and triceps dips, and get a great full body workout!



The stairs in your home provide an opportunity for both cardiovascular and strength exercise.

COUNTERTOPS AND TABLES

Solid surfaces like countertops and tables provide an excellent foundation for push-ups and can also be used to give a little support for other lower body exercises such as lunges or squats. This is also a great place to practice your balance exercises. Try standing on one foot or putting your feet in a tandem stance, one foot in front of the other. Use the counter or table to assist as needed. Increase the difficulty by closing your eyes; hover a hand over the surface for safety.



Be sure to keep your hands near the countertop for safety.

LAUNDRY

Looking for some clean clothes and some more mobility? You will learn to love your laundry! Sit on the floor with the laundry basket between your legs. Try to straighten out your knees if you can. Lean forward to grab your t-shirt from the basket, fold, and rotate your body to place it in a pile beside you. You have just done some wonderful mobility for your back, legs, and shoulders while completing one of your must-do tasks.

VACUUMING

Vacuuming just might become your new favorite chore – add in some lunges and get exercise while you make your home sparkle! You can go forward, backward, or diagonal while vacuuming. Watch your posture while you perform your lunges.



Watch your posture when you perform your lunges.

CANNED FOOD

Canned food was one of the fastest items to fly off the shelf this month, cans of beans were particularly popular. So grab those beans and use them as a resistance weight to do some great upper body exercises! (When you're done working out, crack open those beans and eat 'em up – they're an excellent source of vegetable protein!)

COUCH CUSHIONS

Looking for a fun family activity that also improves your balance? Throw those couch cushions on the floor and have each family member step up on one. Play *Follow the Leader* and see how many ways you can stand on the cushions to challenge your balance. For even more fun, have everyone name their posture! Flopping Flamingo anyone?

PETS

OK, OK – pets are not technically a “household item” but they can be great exercise buddies! Get outside and take a walk with your best friend. If you cannot get outside, try playing with your cat or dog, but instead of sitting, make the floor your friend and crawl!

KITCHEN CHAIRS

Chair squats are one of the best lower body exercises of all time. Standing in front of the chair, lower your bottom so that you just touch the seat then pop right back up. Do 10 to 15 of these pop-ups. You can even do it every time you sit to eat for a great infusion of activity into your day.

WASHER AND DRYER

Doing a load of laundry? It doesn't need to be a drag, especially if you use it to strengthen your lower body. Grab the clean clothes from the washer, take a side step, then side lunge and place the clothes into the dryer.

WATER JUGS

Have you been trying to drink more water? You will work up a thirst after this amazing Water Jug Workout! Use the jugs to perform five muscle-building moves and add a cardio blast between sets for a full body workout. When you finish, pop the top and quench your thirst!

Whatever you do, keep moving.

Remember, all activity counts toward a healthier you! Choose a few of these at-home exercises each day. Find inspiration in these activities and identify other tools you have in your own home that you can use as part of your daily routine. Whatever you choose to do, remember that getting up and getting moving is an important part of your daily routine.

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