

Fact sheet

Exercises to avoid for older adults

A number of common exercises are not recommended as they could be harmful to the participant. Most often these exercises place undue strain on the lower back and may lead to injury.

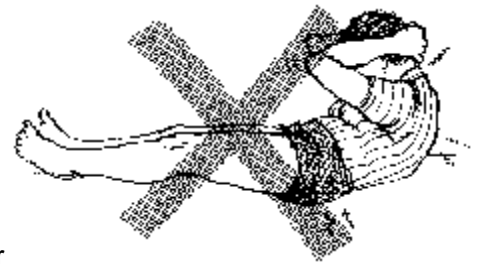
As a general rule it is advisable to avoid exercises that feel uncomfortable or cause pain to a joint or muscle. The concept of "no pain, no gain" has long been changed to a recognition that there is "no gain, when in pain".

Exercises to avoid:

Straight leg abdominal curls

Performing abdominal curls with straight legs places a strain on the lower back and can lead to more serious injury.

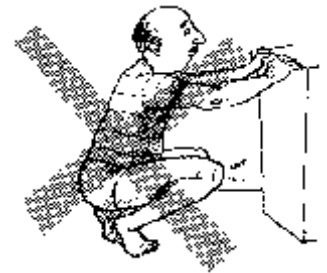
Abdominal curls should always be attempted with flexed knees, and hand placed alongside the trunk or across the chest.



Deep knee bends

During this movement the knee becomes unstable and a greater stress loading is experienced through the joint, both of which may result in injury.

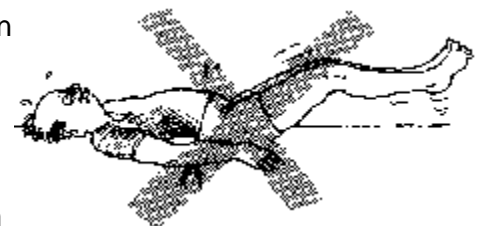
Knee bends should only be performed to a point where the knee joint angle behind the knee closes to no less than 90 degrees.



Straight leg raises

Raising both legs off the ground at once places strain on the lumbar region of the back.

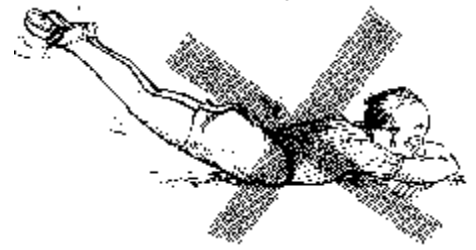
The exercise should be performed by raising only one leg up at a time, with the other leg flexed and on the ground.



Double leg hyperextensions

This exercise places strain on the lower back and should not be attempted.

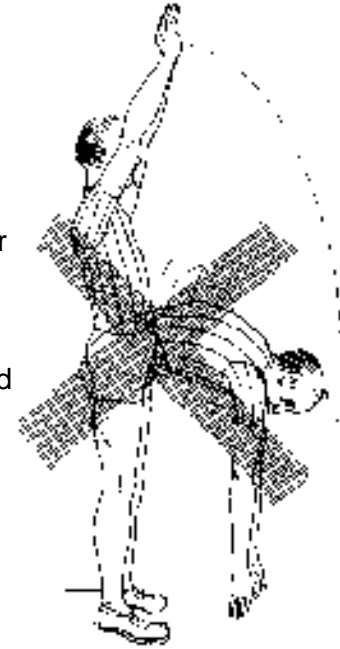
Raising one leg at a time is a much safer exercise.



Toe Touching

This exercise places an unnecessary strain on the lower back, as the exercise is often performed quickly in the belief that it stretches the leg and lower back muscles.

An ideal alternative to this exercise can be performed simply by sitting on the ground and slowly reaching forward to touch the toes.



Isometric exercises

Isometric or static exercises (tensing the muscles against an immovable object) are generally unsafe for older adults as this type of exercise places enormous pressure on the heart and can raise blood pressure. Under qualified supervision however, certain isometric exercises may be prescribed.

Please note: This information is a guide only. All adults should seek advice prior to commencing an exercise program. Do not commence exercise without consulting an appropriate health professional.

For more information

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