

SPINAL HYGIENE ISOMETRIC EXERCISES

I wanted to provide a spinal hygiene and general fitness option for people who for any reason are finding regular exercise or our spinal hygiene exercises too difficult. This can happen because of injury, post-surgery, after years of not exercising regularly, or for some seniors who are limited in mobility. Feel free to pass these exercises on to anyone, or use yourself if they can help you.

Research suggests that static isometric exercises, which involve using your muscles to hold your body still in certain positions, are even more effective at reducing your blood pressure and improving heart health. In a review of 270 clinical trials involving 15,827 participants in the British Medical Journal Dr Jamie O'Driscoll found isometric moves could be helpful for everyone of middle-age and older. Rather than performing endless repetitions with increasingly heavy weights, eight minutes of isometric exercises such as planks, wall sits and squat holds, three times a week, could bring benefits for heart health while boosting balance, posture and muscular endurance. O'Driscoll's research compared the effects of most types of exercise such as cardio, plyometrics, weights, and HIIT. Results showed that all exercise was helpful in reducing hypertension, but that static exercise was the most effective.

Other findings show the benefits of this training go beyond heart health. This allows injured athletes or people limited from conventional exercises to maintain fitness levels without stressing injured or immobile joints. "What these exercises do very well is improve muscle endurance, or the capacity of muscles to sustain effort," Dalton Wong, the founder of TwentyTwo Training, says. "This is very important when it comes to maintaining good posture and stability...The real beauty of static training is that it requires little or no equipment. You can do it using your own body weight and it is supremely time efficient." Wong says.

Isometric routine

Choose 4 exercises to hold for 2 minutes each, 3 times a week.

(If you need to stop just stand up or kneel then return to the position to finish the two minutes)

1- **Plank** -Lie face down with your elbows on the ground. Raise your body so your elbows are at 90 degrees and your weight is distributed over your forearms and feet. Keep your back in line with your head and feet, looking down towards your hands and engage your core muscles to hold for two minutes.

2-**Bear plank** -Start on your hands and knees with your weight evenly distributed. Engage your glutes (bottom) and core to lift your knees slightly off the ground. Keep your eyes on the floor and lower your back so it's slightly rounded but not arched. Hold this position for two minutes, lowering your knees momentarily if it is too tough.

3-**V-sit** -Start by lying on the floor. Simultaneously raise your upper and lower body to form a V position, with your core engaged, knees slightly bent, feet just off the ground and arms straight out in front of you. Hold for two minutes. If you need to, place your hands on the floor for support.

4-**Squat hold** -Stand upright, with your back straight and feet wider than hip width (even wider will place less stress on your knees). Bend from the hips, keeping your weight over your heels and lowering your bottom until your thighs are parallel to the ground, or as low as is manageable. Hold for two minutes.

5-**Standing scaption raises** -Stand with your knees slightly bent, holding a dumbbell in each hand at your sides, with your thumbs at the highest point. Keeping your arms straight, raise the weights to shoulder height in front of you in a wide V, so that you feel a stretch across the shoulders. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and engage the core muscles to hold for two minutes.

6-**Wall sit** -Stand with your back against a wall and feet shoulder width apart. Slowly slide your back down the wall, inching your feet forwards, until your thighs are parallel to the ground or at an angle that feels comfortable to hold (it's better to start in a moderate position). Make sure your knees are directly above your ankles not in front of them, keep your back flat on the wall. Hold this position for two minutes.

7-**Bridge** -Lie on your back with your hands by your sides, knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Tighten your glutes, engage your core and lift your hips towards the ceiling until you have a straight line from your shoulders to your knees. Hold this position for two minutes.