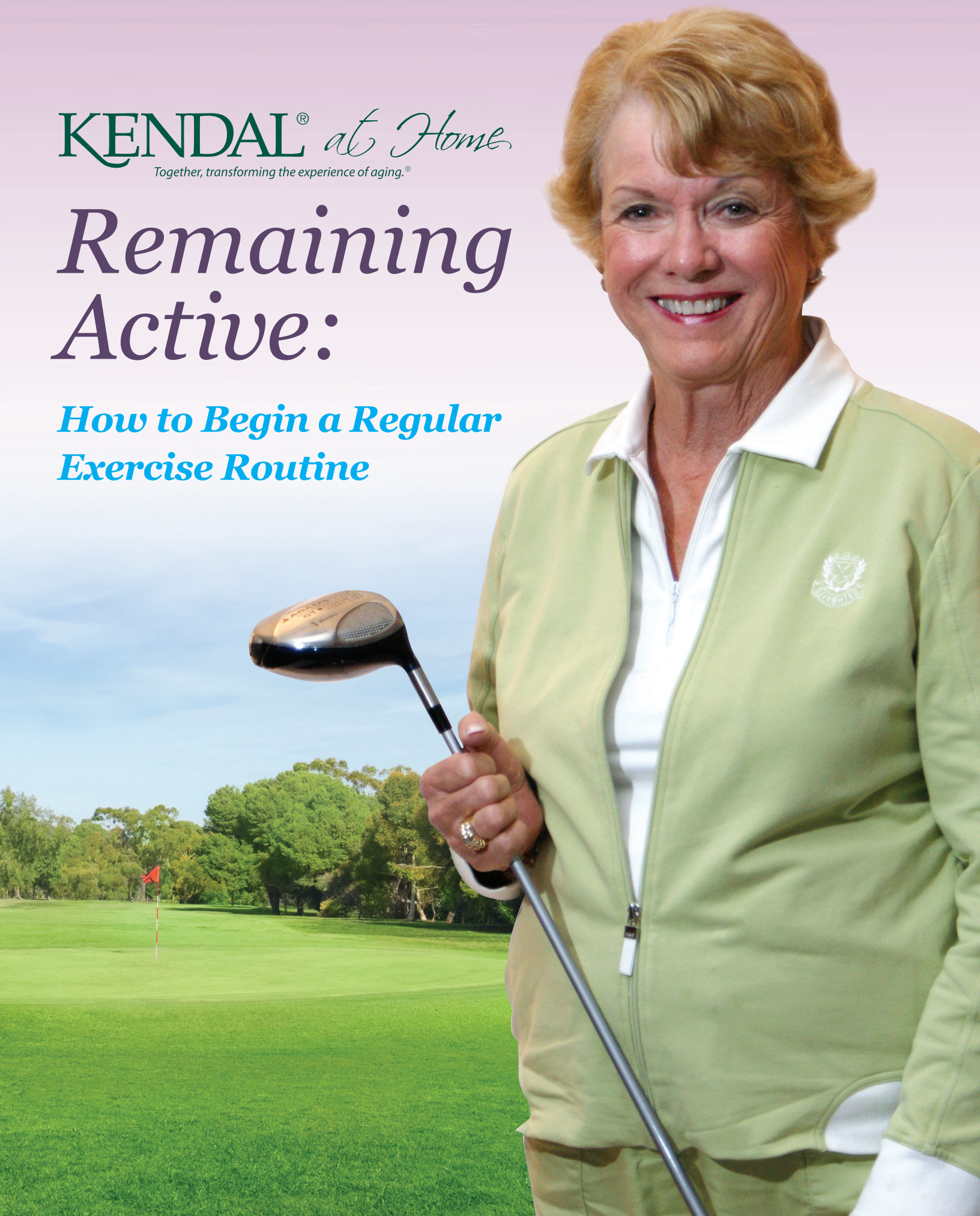


KENDAL<sup>®</sup> *at Home*  
Together, transforming the experience of aging.<sup>®</sup>

# *Remaining Active:*

*How to Begin a Regular  
Exercise Routine*





You know exercise helps improve your physical, mental and emotional health as you age, but knowing the benefits of exercise doesn't make beginning a regular exercise routine any easier. The older we become, the more impossible 20 to 30-minute workouts several times a week seem. Plus, those of us who experience aches and pains, like periodic lower back pain, often avoid exercise, believing rest is more beneficial. However, inactivity actually puts us at greater risk of continuing pain. *Remember to consult your doctor before beginning a new fitness routine.*

If it's been a while since you've exercised, don't fret; beginning an exercise routine is easier than you may think – if you begin slowly.

A typical age-appropriate exercise routine begins and ends with stretching and incorporates movements that focus on balance, flexibility, strengthening the core and building other muscle strength.



## Begin & End With Stretching

Stretching is vital to prevent bodily injury and to keep your body functioning at its finest, so stretching should be incorporated into your morning, afternoon and evening routines, as well as before and after exercise.

### *Recommended stretching exercises include:*

#### Leg stretch

Sit in a chair with your legs bent in front of you. Straighten your right leg as much as possible without locking your knee. Lengthen your spine then lean forward, reaching your hands toward your foot. Hold the stretch for 20 to 30 seconds, then rest and repeat with a flexed foot. Repeat the routine on your left side.

#### Shoulder Stretch

Sit in a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Raise your left shoulder, slowly rotating it backward in a circle, then around to the front. Do the same with your right shoulder, alternating between the two. Continue this motion until both shoulders feel loose.

#### Chest Stretch

Begin by standing with your arms at your side and feet shoulder-width apart. Extend both arms behind your back and clasp your hands together (if possible). Stop when you feel a good stretch or sense discomfort. Hold this position for 20 to 30 seconds, then rest and repeat.

#### Quadriceps Stretch

Stand next to a sturdy chair or a counter with your feet shoulder-width apart. Use your left hand to hold onto the chair or counter for balance. Slowly bend your right knee back, grabbing your right ankle with your right hand until your thigh is straight up and down. Do not lean forward or backward. (If you can't grasp your ankle in your hand, just keep your leg as close to perpendicular as possible and hold the bend, or place your foot on the seat of a chair.) Hold the stretch for 30 seconds then repeat on the left side.



## ✓ Balance Exercises

When exercising, specifically when practicing balance exercises, always support yourself by holding something sturdy with both hands to prevent a fall. As your balance and muscle strength improve, gradually decrease support to one hand, then one finger until you can perform the exercises without support. Even then, it is a wise precaution to exercise within reach of sturdy support. It's also wise to exercise in the presence of a friend or family member.

### *Are you a balance exercise beginner?*

Try these balance exercises to get started:

#### One-Legged Crane

Bend your left knee slightly then slowly raise your right foot from the ground. Hold the position for 10 seconds then slowly return your right foot to the ground. Alternate legs and repeat 10 times.

#### High Step

Parallel to a wall or counter, place a row of three soft objects such as slippers or folded towels about 12 inches apart (15 if you're tall). Standing behind the first object, lift your foot at least six inches from the ground, and step over the first object. You should be standing between the first and second objects. Pause to regain your balance then step over the second object. Continue over the third. Once you've stepped over the third object, turn and continue in the opposite direction. Practice five times in each direction with an objective to eliminate your pauses between steps.

#### Heel to Toe

Secure a tape line 10 feet along the floor parallel to a wall. Stepping heel to toe, walk the length of the line, turn and return. Repeat the circuit five times.

*As you become more confident with your balance exercises, practice turning your head and scanning the room from left to right and back again. Being able to search for possible tripping hazards while you're moving can help reduce falling risks.*

*Tai Chi is also an ideal balance exercise for mature gym-goers. Tai Chi is an ancient form of moving meditation and relaxation from China that enables you to achieve and maintain physical and mental harmony and overall health. Tai Chi, like aerobics, can be performed in the water. Water Tai Chi is especially beneficial for arthritis sufferers.*







## Muscle-Building Exercises

Muscle loss is one of the biggest challenges we face as we age. Those over the age of 60 can lose about two pounds of muscle every five years; an average male who weighs 180 pounds may lose as much as 10 pounds of muscle mass over a decade.<sup>1</sup>

But muscle loss isn't inevitable. In fact, older adults who perform resistance exercises, like weight lifting, can not only reverse age-related muscle loss, but actually build new muscle, too. The main benefit of building muscle is to help prevent falls, one of the most common reasons older adults are hospitalized.



An ideal way for older adults with sedentary lifestyles to begin a weight lifting regime is by simply getting in and out of their chairs 10 or more times. Using one's own body mass as a weight is a reasonable way to start weight lifting.

Older adults already working toward improving their physical health with exercises, like Tai Chi or water aerobics, can begin at a more advanced weight lifting level.

## Try incorporating the following three weight lifting exercises:

### Squats

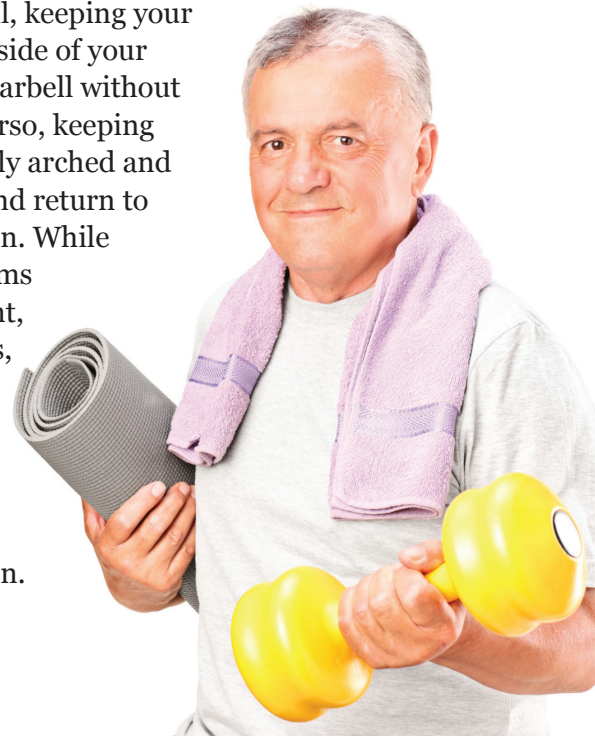
Squatting is one of the best ways to build leg muscle. To perform squats, stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. While holding a support bar, bend your knees slowly, lowering your body toward the ground. Stop when your thighs are nearly parallel to the ground; then slowly rise to standing position. If you suffer from sore or painful joints, try a leg press machine for results similar to squatting.

### Bench Press

The bench press is one of the best muscle-building moves for the upper body because it works the chest, triceps and shoulders simultaneously. To perform a bench press, lie flat on your back on a weight bench with a barbell resting above. Lower the weight to your chest, then press it upward until your arms are fully extended. If you do not have access to a weight bench or barbell, lie flat on the floor, using any appropriate weight as a barbell. Always have a strong spotter with you when performing bench press exercises. You need a person who can easily lift the weight you are working with.

### Dead Lifts

Dead lifts work mostly lower body and back muscles. To perform dead lifts, stand shoulder width apart with your legs straight over an appropriately weighted barbell. Align the joints of your toes with the barbell. Slowly bend at the knees and grasp the barbell, keeping your arms on the outside of your knees. Lift the barbell without bending your torso, keeping your back slightly arched and your head up, and return to standing position. While keeping your arms and back straight, bend your knees, lowering the barbell to the floor, then slowly rise, returning to standing position.



*Remember to consult your doctor before beginning a new fitness routine.*



## Treating Exercise-Related Injuries

Increasing your activity level comes with the risk of achy muscles and sore backs, no matter your age. While the aches and pains of exercise can be uncomfortable, they shouldn't deter you from staying active.

### *Staying active despite the aches and pains:*

Use our guide to determine how to treat minor aches and pains



**Use heat** to relax chronic sore muscles, muscle spasms and osteoarthritis flare ups. Protect the skin from burns by placing a towel between the pad and skin. Apply heat for 20 to 30-minute intervals, and check frequently to prevent burning.



**Use ice** to treat new injuries, limit swelling and reduce pain. Apply cold using an ice pack or bag of frozen vegetables. Protect skin from frostbite by placing a towel between the cold pack and skin. Apply cold for 20 to 30-minute intervals, and check frequently to prevent skin injury.

*Be sure to consult your doctor if pain persists or worsens.*







## Exercise Benefits

*The benefits of a regular exercise routine are seemingly endless.*

**Stretching** keeps muscles limber, relieves muscle tension, increases blood circulation and improves posture.

**Balance training** can help prevent falls and decrease the possibility of serious injury should a fall occur.

**Exercise** can calm your mind, center your energy and relieve built-up tension and stress.

**Getting more exercise** has been proven to reduce the risk of dementia and help maintain cognition and memory.



## Remember, exercise doesn't only happen at the gym!

Dancing, gardening, walking, golfing and even video games like Wii boxing or bowling qualify as exercise as long as your heart rate increases to 20 beats above its resting rate.

<sup>1</sup> **National Public Radio:** [www.npr.org/2011/02/21/133776800/seniors-can-still-bulk-up-on-muscle-by-pressing-iron](http://www.npr.org/2011/02/21/133776800/seniors-can-still-bulk-up-on-muscle-by-pressing-iron)

No matter your interest or fitness level, you can find an exercise program to take part in through **Kendal at Home**.

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