Chair yoga for seniors: 12 seated poses

Sit towards the front of a stable chair without wheels, feet flat. Breathe normally. Do each pose slowly, a few times, resting in between. About 40 seconds per pose makes a 10-minute routine.

Move gently and stop straight away if anything hurts or you feel dizzy or unwell. If you have a health condition, recent surgery, osteoporosis or a heart condition, ask your doctor or physiotherapist first.

1. Seated shoulder-blade glide

Start: Sit upright with your hands resting on your thighs.
Move: Sit upright with your hands resting. Draw the shoulder blades a little closer together, then soften.
Easier: Make the movement smaller and slower, or rest on the chair for this part.

2. Shoulder lift and release

Start: Sit tall with both feet on the floor and your arms relaxed.
Move: Gently lift both shoulders a little, then let them relax back down.
Easier: Make the movement smaller and slower, or rest on the chair for this part.

3. Gentle neck turn

Start: Sit upright with your chin level and your shoulders relaxed.
Move: With your chin level, turn your head a short way to one side, then come back to centre.
Easier: Make the movement smaller and slower, or rest on the chair for this part.

4. Seated cat-cow

Start: Sit towards the front half of the seat with your hands on your thighs.
Move: With your hands on your thighs, gently round your upper back a little. Return to upright.
Easier: Make the movement smaller and slower, or rest on the chair for this part.

5. Small seated turn

Start: Sit upright with your hips facing forward and both feet flat.
Move: Keep your hips facing forward. Turn your upper chest a little to one side, then return to centre.
Easier: Make the movement smaller and slower, or rest on the chair for this part.

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6. Seated side bend

Start: Sit tall with one hand resting on your thigh and the other relaxed beside the chair.

Move: Let one hand travel a little down beside your chair, then return upright.

Easier: Make the movement smaller and slower, or rest on the chair for this part.

7. Low forward reach

Start: Sit upright with both hands resting on your thighs.

Move: Reach one hand forward below shoulder height, then bring it back to your thigh.

Easier: Make the movement smaller and slower, or rest on the chair for this part.

8. Open and soften the hands

Start: Rest your forearms on your thighs with your palms facing down or up.

Move: Rest your forearms on your thighs. Gently spread your fingers, then soften them again.

Easier: Make the movement smaller and slower, or rest on the chair for this part.

9. Small wrist bend

Start: Let one forearm rest on your thigh with the hand just past your knee.

Move: Let your forearm rest on your thigh. Tilt one hand a little at the wrist, then bring it back.

Easier: Make the movement smaller and slower, or rest on the chair for this part.

10. Seated hip opening

Start: Sit with both feet flat on the floor, about hip-width apart.

Move: With both feet on the floor, let one bent knee open a little to the side, then bring it back.

Easier: Make the movement smaller and slower, or rest on the chair for this part.

11. Small seated march

Start: Sit upright, hold the sides of the seat if you like, and keep both feet flat.

Move: Keep one knee bent and lift that foot a little. Set it down before you change sides.

Easier: Make the movement smaller and slower, or rest on the chair for this part.

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12. Seated heel rise

Start: Sit with both feet flat on the floor under your knees.
Move: Keep the balls of your feet on the floor. Lift both heels a little, then lower them.
Easier: Make the movement smaller and slower, or rest on the chair for this part.

Finish: rest on the chair and let your breathing settle before you stand up.