

Dr. Phil Good's Personal Workout Program

Resistance Exercises

*Note – Information regarding the resistance, repetitions, etc. I use in my workouts is simply to give an idea of the intensity of exercise involved in maintaining my current level of conditioning. What I do is certainly not ideal for all people and all situations.

Pull-ups / Chin-Ups

Wide Grip



Narrow Grip



Pull-ups / Chin-Ups (continued)

Reverse Grip (Chin-ups)



I usually do 15 reps of wide grip pull-ups at the beginning, and 15 reverse grip at the end of my main workouts, although I will change the grip on occasion.

Negatives (Option If You Can't Do Full Pull-Ups Yet)



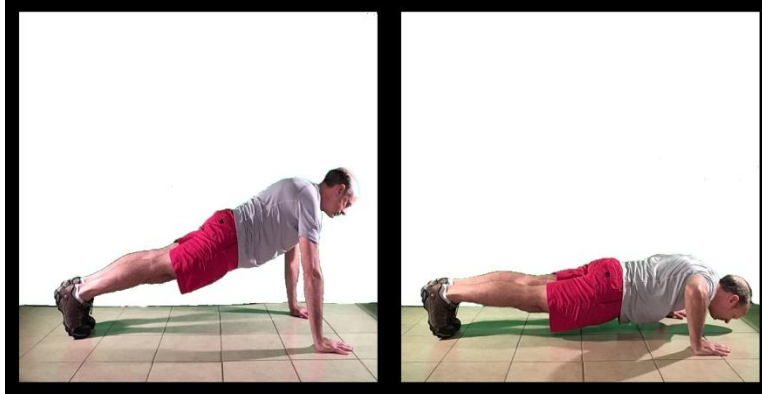
With negatives, use a step of some kind to get you to the raised position, then pull your legs up off of the step and slowly lower your body until your arms are straight. Carefully place your feet on the step and use your legs as much as you need to help your arms raise yourself to the starting position again.

Bench Press



It's a good idea to have a spotter (someone to help you if you are unable to lift the weight back into the rack by yourself), or use a bench press machine of some sort rather than free weights. At a minimum for safety, I suggest using a bench with a secondary rack that's a few inches above your chest (it's hard to see in the pictures, but that's the type of bench I'm using) – just high enough that you only have to raise the weight a little bit to where you can use the secondary rack and be able to get out from under the bar if you need to. I usually do 2 sets at a weight I can lift 3 to 4 times, 2 sets at a weight I can lift twice, and 2 sets at a weight I can lift once for my main workouts.

Push-ups



Push-ups are a good alternative to bench press, although they tend to provide more of a toning effect than mass-building as compared to bench press with heavy resistance. I do them mainly when I'm traveling and don't have easy access to a gym. Push-ups can be further modified as shown in the optional exercises that follow to allow for strengthening when you are not yet able to do a significant number of full push-ups

"Cheater" Push-ups



Wall Push-ups



“Draw the Gun”



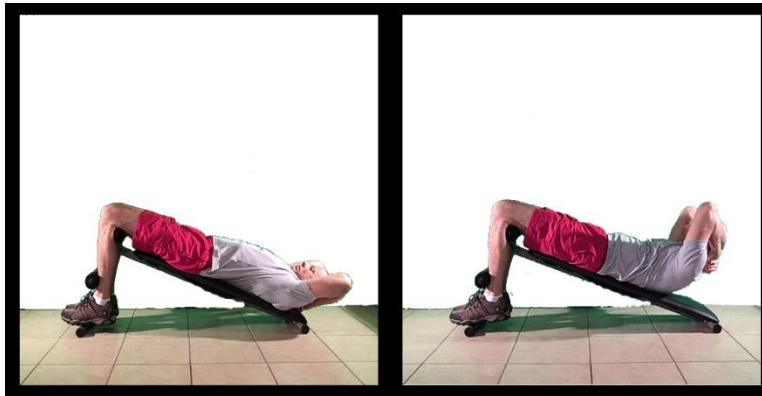
*Maximum weight for this exercise is 5 (yes, I mean five!) pounds regardless of how strong you are!

This is an exercise for the rotator cuff muscles and because the main rotator cuff tendon has limited space to move, it's important to focus on toning with high repetitions and low weight to avoid causing excessive increases in tendon mass (thickness) which can result in tendon impingement and damage.

Start by holding the weight at the top of your waist on the side opposite the shoulder you are exercising. Slowly raise the weight up and out as shown, pause for a moment and slowly return to the starting position. In my normal 3 time per week workouts, I usually do 30 reps with 5 pounds on each arm, with a set after each of my first 4 sets of bench press to balance the work on the pecs and the rotator cuff.

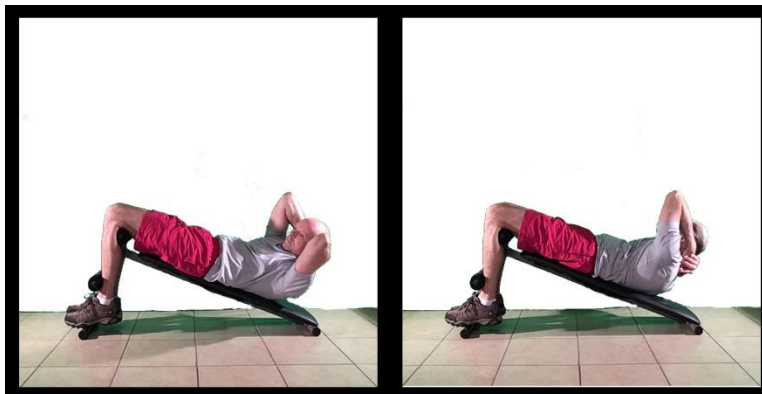
Crunches

Slant Board Straight Crunch



Bear in mind that you are only raising your shoulder blades off the slant board. Full sit-ups actually exercise the hip flexors more than the abs and are counter-productive in most cases, as they can lead to low back problems. I usually do 200 of these (as a single set) in my main workouts.

Slant Board Oblique Crunch



As you come up, rotate your torso so that you move your elbow towards the opposite side knee. I usually do 50 of these to each side (100 total) in my supplemental abdominal and balance exercise sessions.

Ten Position Flat Crunch



I suggest starting with 5 to 10 repetitions for each of the 10 positions, working up to 25 or more of each (I do 30 of each in my supplemental abdominal and balance workouts). The first 8 positions are done from a back-lying position, with the final two done side-lying. As with any crunches, only go up until your shoulder blades are off the floor or mat. The ten positions are:

1. Feet flat on floor/mat with toes pointing towards each other.
2. Feet flat on floor/mat with soles of feet together.
3. Same as #1, but with feet off of floor/mat, with lower legs parallel to the surface.
4. Same as #2, with feet off of floor/mat, with lower legs parallel to the surface.
5. One leg straight out with toes pointed, about a foot or so off the surface, other leg bent 90 degrees at the hip and knee.
6. Same as #5 with the right and left leg positions reversed.
7. Legs together pointing straight up (or as straight as you can per your flexibility).
8. Legs spread apart, pointing upwards with knees straight (or straight-ish depending on your flexibility).
9. Start lying on your side with knees bent and raise your torso sideways, lifting
10. Same as #9 lying on opposite side.

Planks



Planks are a good exercise for the abdominal core muscles. They can be done in a variety of positions, but the basic straight plank as shown does a good job and is easy to do. I will sometimes sway my hips or flex and extend my ankles to further challenge the core muscles. Beginners may find it difficult to hold a steady plank position for more than 20 or 30 seconds, but with consistent use, it's possible to work up to a few minutes relatively quickly. I do three to four repetitions of 1 to 2 minutes each as part of my short supplemental abdominal and balance training workouts.

Dips



This exercise should be avoided or possibly modified by not going down as far if you have shoulder or elbow problems. I do 15 repetitions in my normal workouts.

As with pull-ups, dips can be done as a negative-only exercise. Use a step of some kind to use your legs to help get yourself into the raised (arms fully straight) position, then carefully step off and lower yourself. As you go down, carefully place your feet on the step to avoid going down too far.

Knee Raises



These can be done with a dip station, pull-up station, or with a harness. You can do them by bringing your knees straight up in front of you for a general ab and hip flexor workout, or as shown, bringing the knees across the body to more specifically work the abdominal oblique muscles. I usually do 15 to each side in my normal exercise sessions.

Bent Rows



Rows can be done in a variety of ways using free weights, elastic bands, or various machines, but the single arm bent row using a bench or chair is one of the simplest. To get the maximum benefit and to work the upper back and back of the shoulder, it's important to bring your arm (or arms if doing a two-armed row of some sort) all the way back and squeeze your shoulder blade(s) towards the spine. I typically do 30 repetitions of these with each arm with a 40 pound weight in my exercise sessions.

Squats

Knee-Friendly Squats



Weightlifting purists will insist that squats have to be done lowering yourself as far as possible – to where your butt nearly touches the ground. Regardless of how strong you are, full squats like that are hell on the knee joints, especially if you're 50 or older. Modified squats in which you only go down to a 90 degree bend in the knees (or less if you find that's still too much pressure on the joints) still provide a good workout for the muscles of the legs and buttocks. I usually do modified squats over my weight bench because the contact of my lower butt with the bench is a well-placed marker for the maximum amount of squat I want to do. Obviously, not everyone is the same height, so you may need to find a chair or other sturdy object to serve the same purpose, or simply do the exercise in front of a mirror to monitor the depth of your squat so that you protect your knees.

I typically do squats with hand weights as shown, but the resistance can of course be a barbell, tubing, or from a machine of some form. Because I don't usually have a spotter available, nor a formal squat rack or machine, I usually do high repetitions to compensate for using relatively low weights (my usual workout is 25 repetitions with two 40 pound hand weights), but if you have the facilities to safely use heavier resistance, you will typically build more muscle mass with heavier resistance and lower reps as opposed to more toning with higher reps and lower resistance.

If you don't have any equipment, you can still get a good workout for the legs and buttocks doing body-weight-only squats with high repetitions and/or doing single leg squat-like exercises as shown in the balance exercise section.

Shoulder Press



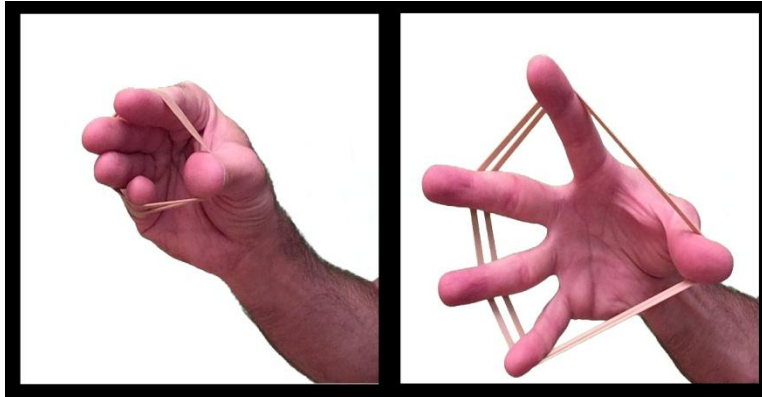
Shoulder press is a great workout for the triceps and shoulder muscles, but this exercise should be avoided if you have shoulder problems such as degenerative arthritis, shoulder impingement, or instability of the shoulder joint. I do 15 repetitions with 40 pound hand weights in my usual workouts.

Calf Raises



Because the calf muscles get more exercise just in the normal course of the day than most other muscles in the body, they tend to need higher repetitions than most muscles when you exercise them. For example, I usually do 50 repetitions with two 40 pound hand weights during my main workout and additional calf work on a wobble board (as shown in the section on balance exercises).

Finger Extensions



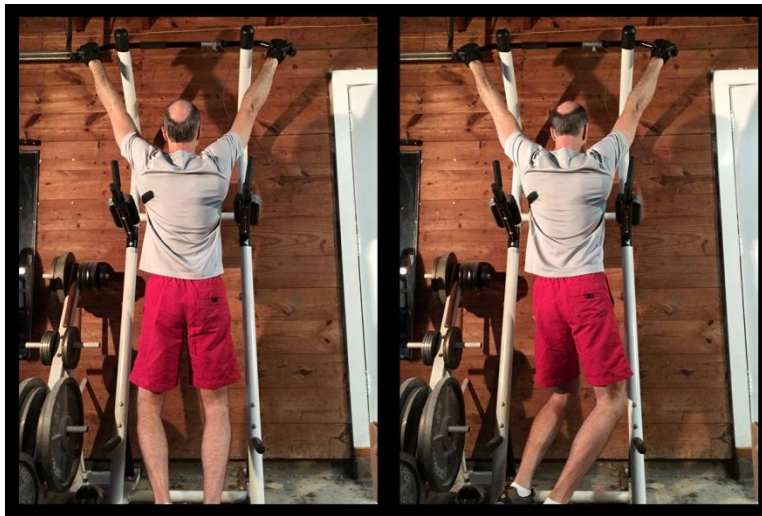
This exercise is particularly useful to balance the muscles of the hands and forearms for people whose hands get a lot of gripping work (carpenters, massage therapists, etc.) or do repetitive tasks with their fingers (such as people who do a lot of data entry on computers). As such, it is often helpful for alleviating symptoms of carpal tunnel, arthritis, and other mechanically-induced hand and wrist complaints. If you find that your finger extensor muscles are really weak, start with a relatively thin rubber band and gradually work up to thicker and/or more bands to increase resistance. I suggest doing a fairly high number of repetitions with this exercise – 20 to 30 or more – using whatever resistance gives you a slight burning in the back of the forearms towards the end of the set. I have relatively heavy work using my hands as part of my occupation, so I do two sets of 50 repetitions on each hand using two medium sized bands, or one really thick band (like what they use to bundle broccoli at the grocery store). People with less intense hand use don't need as much to balance the muscles, but the exercise will help you build more defined forearms in any case.

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Flexibility Exercises

Free Hang

Two Arm Hang From Pull-up Bar



This can be done with a wide or narrow grip. I usually allow my feet to rest on the ground as holding them up involves contracting some of the muscles around the spine, making for a less-effective stretch. I also usually twist gently back and forth as shown in the picture to stretch things at different angles. I usually do this for about 30 seconds a couple of times with my hands at different widths.

Straight Arm Hang From Dip Station Swinging Legs Together



Push yourself up with your arms extended and relax your lower body as much as possible. Swing your legs gently back and forth to loosen the lower back and hips.

Straight Arm Hang From Dip Station “Walking” Motion



Same as above, but with swinging legs individually in a walking motion.

Bent Arm Hang From Dip Station “Walking” Motion



Another option for arm position when doing a hang from the dip station.

Straight Arm Hang From Chairs



If you don't have a dip station, you can do something similar with a couple of chairs – just be sure they are sturdy and positioned someplace they won't slide out from under you!

Back Extension



This is a great exercise for most low back and upper back problems, including disc protrusions. In most cases, the position on the left is adequate to get good results and is a good starting point if you've never done this type of stretch before. The position on the right, known as "the cobra" in yoga, will stretch things more, but sometimes can irritate spinal arthritis. If you have been diagnosed with severe spinal degeneration, stenosis, or spondylolisthesis, both positions should be avoided unless directed by a health care professional familiar with your case. Back extension should also be avoided if it causes any pain or numbness in either leg (or causes existing pain/numbness to extend further down the leg), unless directed by a health care professional.

Knee to Chest Stretch

Single Knee to Opposite Shoulder



The single leg knee to chest stretch can be done straight or as shown with the knee being pulled towards the opposite shoulder. I typically do the straight knee to chest with both legs (which will be shown next) to save a little time and do this to get a little different angle on things for the individual legs and to better stretch the piriformis muscle (which, when tight, can cause sciatica-like symptoms).

Two Leg Knee to Chest



Figure 4 Stretch



Sometimes used as a piriformis stretch, the Figure 4 actually targets the gluteus minimus muscle better than the piriformis. Tightness in the gluteus minimus may cause sciatica-like pain, but it's usually in the side of the leg, rather than the back of the leg as with true sciatica and pain from the piriformis muscle. Start with lying on your back with your legs bent. Cross one leg over the other and reach behind the straight leg with your hands and pull it towards your chest. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds and then switch legs. Repeat as needed.

Flat Bicycle



This is a mobilization for the hips, sacroiliac joints (where the spine joins the pelvis), and the low back, as well as a toning exercise for the abs and leg muscles. Lie on your back, raise your bent legs from the floor, and alternate straightening and bending your legs as shown, simulating the motion of riding a bicycle. I usually do about 30 repetitions as part of my before bed stretching routine.

Enhanced Pelvic Tilt



The pelvic tilt is done lying on the back as shown and alternating between extension and flexion of the lower spine as seen in the close-ups in the lower set of pictures. The usual way the pelvic tilt is done is by actively contracting the abdominal muscles and flexing the lumbar spine (pressing the spine downward until it is flat on the surface) and then simply relaxing to allow the spine to curve upwards again. The enhanced pelvic tilt goes a step further and you actively contract the back and buttock muscles to accentuate the extension of the spine (increasing the upward curve). This exercise enhances mobility in the lower back and provides some basic toning for the abs. I typically do 30 repetitions as part of my evening stretching regimen.

Trunk Rotation



Start as shown in the image on the left and slowly lower your legs to one side, keeping your upper body flat on the floor or mat. Pause for 10 to 15 seconds, slowly return to the starting position, and then lower your legs to the other side. I usually do 10 to 15 to each side every night.

Lying Shoulder/Chest Stretch



I suggest doing two positions as shown – one with the arms straight up over your head and one with them straight out to your sides. Simply get into the position, relax, and take several deep breaths. I do thirty seconds to a minute in each position as part of my nightly regimen.

Head Retraction



The exercise is done with a pillow or pad as shown in the top pictures. The bottom pictures are to better illustrate the motion. Begin by standing with your back flat against the wall and your head jutting forward slightly (you want a pillow or pad that holds your head forward a bit from the wall when you are standing relaxed). With slow, steady pressure, press your head straight back into the pillow/pad. The motion is a straight back “slide” of the head as opposed to tipping your head backwards.

Upright Chest Stretch



Stand next to a wall or solid object and hold on to it with your arm straight out to your side at approximately shoulder level as shown in the picture on the left. Slowly turn your body so that your arm is pulled straight back behind you as shown in the picture on the right. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds, then slowly turn your body back to the starting position. Switch arms and repeat. If you have shoulder problems, you may not be able to get all the way to the second position – simply go as far as you can without feeling significant pain. I usually do a couple of repetitions with each arm every night, but if you have restricted mobility on this stretch, it usually helps to do it frequently throughout the day to make better gains in muscle flexibility and more frequent stretching may help alleviate a variety of shoulder pains.

Back “Scratch” Stretch

Upper Back Scratch



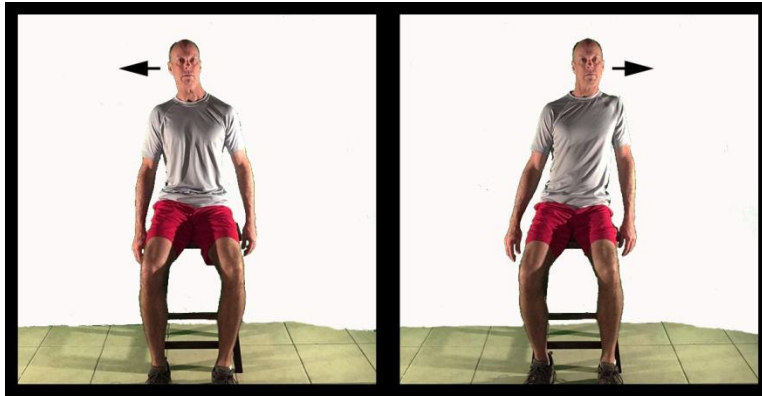
Raise your arm up and reach your hand back towards your shoulder blade, using the other hand to gently increase the stretch. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds. I usually do each arm once or twice every night.

Upper and Lower Back Scratch With Towel



This is another way to stretch the shoulder and is good when your mobility is too restricted to perform the upper back scratch exercise above. Using a towel, rope, or other object, alternate pulling the upper arm back and down with the lower arm and then pulling the lower arm upward with the upper arm. Hold each stretch 15 to 30 seconds. I usually do the stretch shown previously without the towel, but sometimes do this for some variety.

Sideways Neck Translation



This is a good stretch for tightness in the neck and shoulders, as well as a means of helping correct sideways postural distortions. Note that the movement is a “slide” of the head to the side (keeping the eyes relatively level), rather than a “tilt”. I tend towards a sideways postural shift to the right, so I mostly do this exercise to the left as part of my stretching regimen. If you do not have a tendency either direction, going equally to both sides is a good mobilization for the neck.

Neck and Shoulder Side Stretch

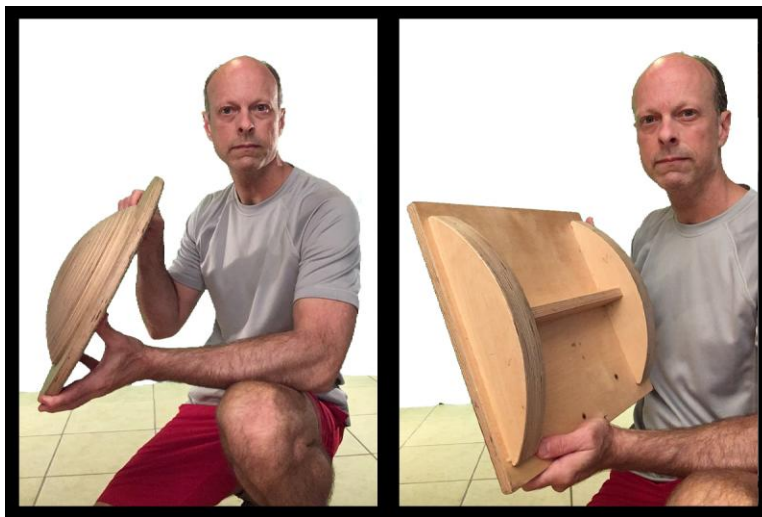


This is a good stretch for loosening tight muscles in the neck, shoulder, and upper back. Use slow, gentle, steady pressure with your hand to increase the sideways tilt of the head (avoid “bouncing” or “jerking” the head, as this will usually cause the muscles to tighten more!). Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds and alternate sides. I usually do this 2 or 3 times to each side every night.

Balance Exercises

*Balance exercises are best done barefooted (to get maximum feedback from the mechanoreceptive system) and on a firm, non-slippery surface. If you have poor balance, it is recommended that you start by doing all of the exercises shown on a flat surface without a wobble board, rocker board, or other balance-challenging device. As your balance improves, you may begin incorporating such devices, starting with the less challenging ones such as rocker boards which only move in one plane of movement.

Wobble and Rocker Boards



Balance Calf Raises

Two Legged Wobble Board Calf Raise



Proper foot placement on the board is very important to beginning the exercise and you may wish to have someone or something (a wall or sturdy piece of furniture) to hold onto to both help get in a good starting position and to catch your balance if you need to during the exercise. You'll need to position yourself so that the balls of your feet are pretty close to the pivot point of the board – if you start too far forward, the edge of the board will hit the floor as you raise up. I usually do 50 repetitions of these for my short abdominal and balance exercise sessions.

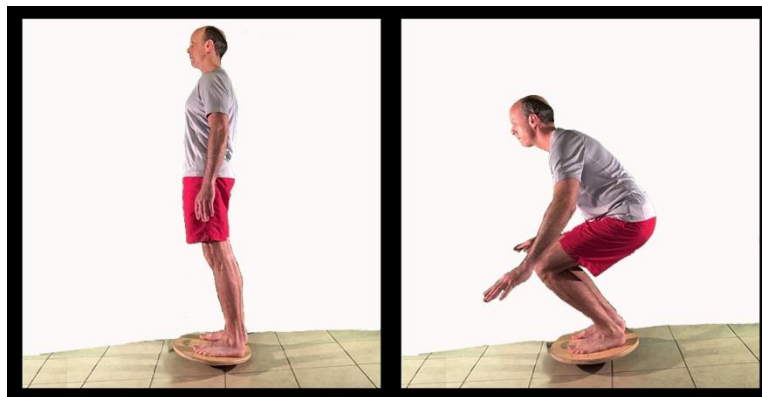
One Legged Wobble Board Calf Raise



Foot position on the board is even more critical for this one than for the two-legged version, particularly on a wobble board (as compared to a rocker board). You'll want the ball of your foot between your first (big) toe and second toe pretty close to the exact center of the board to keep from tilting too far in any direction. I usually do 10 of these on each leg during my supplemental workouts.

Balance Squats

Two Legged Wobble Board Squat / Knee Bends



For this one, you'll want the balls of your feet slightly forward of the pivot point of the board, and as with the calf raises, it's a good idea to have something or someone you can reach out to and catch your balance if you need to. As with the modified squats in my resistance workouts, I only go down to a 90 degree bend in the knee to reduce stress on the joint. I usually do 50 repetitions of these during my balance exercise sessions.

Single Leg Squats / Knee Bends



I have tried doing these on wobble and rocker boards, but have found them to be too easy to lose balance on to be reasonably safe, so I no longer do them with any sort of balance challenging device. I usually do 10 of these on each leg during my balance workouts.

Single Leg Chair Raises



I usually do these on my weight bench, but any secure seating (that won't slide out from under you) on which your legs are bent approximately 90 degrees when seated will work. You start by crossing one leg over the other as shown. Slide your support leg inward a little so that it's lined up with the center of your body and then slowly stand up (without pushing up with your arms), hold for a moment in the upright position, then lower yourself slowly to the seated position. Switch legs and repeat. I usually do 5 to 10 of these on each side during my balance exercise sessions.