



**15 minute
home
workouts**
with Paralympian
Olivia Breen



**Leonard
Cheshire**



Hello everyone!

My name is Olivia and I'm an ambassador for the amazing charity Leonard Cheshire. I'm going to tell you a bit about myself. I'm a 2-time Paralympian – a long jumper and sprinter. I've got mild cerebral palsy and all my four limbs and I love sport!

We're in weird times at the moment with the pandemic, and it's just good to get active, whether that's going out for a walk or doing exercise at home. You can do exercise at home without any equipment – simple stretches can be a big benefit.

This toolkit contains a range of exercises to introduce you to lots of different ways in which you can get active and have fun. You may need to change some of the exercises slightly to get the most out of them, such as doing them from a seated position. Look out for this symbol of a chair, which shows which activities can be done while sitting in a chair or on the floor.



Regular exercise makes you fitter and stronger, but it is also healthy for your mind and can be a boost to your mental health.

Keeping active is my job and it's also great fun. I'm going to take you through some exercises you can do at home – I hope you enjoy them!



Challenge your friends to get more active at home by posting a picture or video on social media, tagging 4 friends, and saying: **This is what I can do #ShowMeYouCan**

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Keeping safe while working out

It is important that while doing these activities at home you do a few things to make sure that you keep safe – see our tips below.

- Make sure you have some water with you before you start. It's really important to keep hydrated, and you'll get thirsty when you're working out.
- Wear comfortable clothing – nothing too baggy as you may trip over.
- Make sure you have enough space to exercise. Your space should be free from obstacles and well lit.
- Only take part in activities that you are comfortable doing – if you get tired or feel in pain, stop and take a rest.
- If you are concerned about the amount of physical exercise you're doing then talk to your doctor about it.
- Never force yourself or strain – working too hard can cause long term injury. Take it easy and have fun.
- If you need support in these activities, ask a family member or someone else you live with to help out.



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In order to remain safe

This booklet does not replace any medical advice. If you are unsure whether to begin the exercises, speak to your GP who can advise you with your next steps.

If any of the exercises cause you pain, stop and make sure that you are following the technique in the instructions. If the pain continues, stop the exercise completely and speak to your GP.

Before and after you exercise

Warm up

It's important to get your body ready before you start to exercise. Warming up helps prepare your body for activity. A warm up gradually gets your body ready to work out by raising your body temperature and increasing blood flow to your muscles. Warming up may also help reduce muscle soreness and lessen your risk of injury.

-  1. **Jog on the spot** for 30 seconds. You can do this from a seated position by moving your arms back and forth.
-  2. **Star jumps** – jump up and reach out with your arms and legs to make an X shape. Jump again, bringing your arms and legs back in before you land. You can do this from a seated position by reaching up with your arms.
-  3. **Hamstring stretch** – sit on the ground with your legs out in front of you. Reach forward to try and touch your toes and hold for 5 seconds. First try your right foot, then your left foot.
-  4. **Punch bag** – while sitting or standing, move one arm forwards at a time to hit an imaginary punch bag.
-  5. **Windmill** – hold your arms out by your sides at shoulder height. Make circles with your arms, starting small and getting bigger, first forwards then backwards.

Cool down

Cooling down after exercise allows your body temperature, blood pressure, and heart rate to return to their normal levels. Stretching your muscles while they are still warm can help to avoid your chance of muscle cramps and stiffness.

1. **Knee lift** – lie on your back and lift your knee to your chest. Hold for 5 seconds, then do the same with your other leg.
-  2. **Hamstring stretch** – sit on the ground with your legs out in front of you. Reach forward to try and touch your toes and hold for 5 seconds. First try your right foot, then your left foot.
-  3. **Frog stretch** – sit cross-legged on the ground and see how far forwards you can reach with your hands. Hold this position for 5 seconds, then sit back up.
4. **Slow walk** – take a stroll around your home to stretch out your legs. Try reaching out with your arms at the same time.
5. **Knee bend** – lie on your stomach and bend your knees. Point your toes towards your head while you try to touch your toes with your hands.

Day 1 – Circuit 1

Circuit training is a mixture of different exercises, which you complete with short rest times between them. One circuit is when all of the chosen exercises have been completed.

Below are 3 exercises to complete which will take 20 seconds each, followed by a minute of rest. This is your circuit for today. Do this circuit 3 times. Take a longer break to relax your body in between each set if needed.

“I’ve failed over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.”
Michael Jordan

Don't forget to challenge your friends on social media by tagging them and saying **#ShowMeYouCan**



Back squats

- Cross your hands in front of your chest, touching the opposite shoulder.
- Bend your knees, pretending that you are sitting down.
- Keep looking forwards while you do this.
- Hold this position for 20 seconds, then stand back up straight.



Lunges

- Step forward with your left leg.
- Bend your knees until your right knee touches the floor.
- Hold this position for 10 seconds, then stand back up straight.
- Repeat the movement but with your right leg forwards.



Kneeling side plank

- Lie on your side with your knees bent, resting on your elbow.
- Lift your body so that your weight is supported by your elbow and your knees.
- Make sure your body is in a straight line - just like a plank!
- Hold this position for 10 seconds, then switch sides and do the same again.

Day 2 – Circuit 2

Below are 3 exercises to complete which will take 20 seconds each, followed by a minute of rest. This is your circuit for today. Do this circuit 3 times. Take a longer break to relax your body in between each set if needed.

“It is not the size of a man but the size of his heart that matters.”
Evander Holyfield

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High knee/arm run

- From a standing position, start with a gentle jog on the spot.
- Increase your speed into a run and raise your knees as high as you can.
- If you are seated, you can move your arms forwards and backwards as fast as you can.
- Keep going for 20 seconds, then rest.



Sit ups

- Lie on the ground with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Keeping your legs in this position, lift your back off the ground without leaning on your hands.
- Relax and lie back down.
- See how many sit ups you can do in 20 seconds!



Rear kicks

- Get on your hands and knees on the ground.
- Lift your left leg until it is in a straight line with your back and hold for 10 seconds.
- Bring your left knee back down to the ground.
- Repeat the action with your right leg.

Day 3 – Yoga

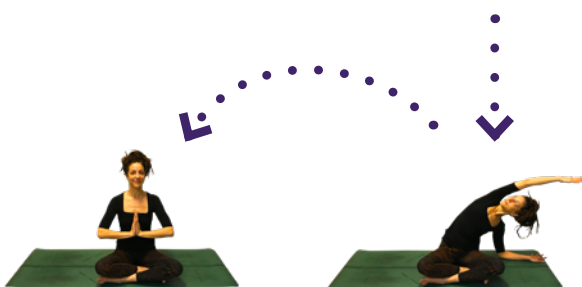
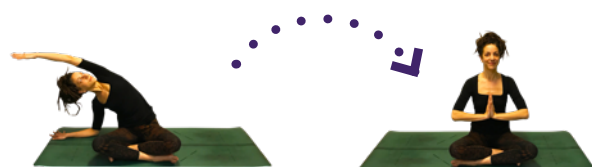
Yoga is an ancient form of exercise from India that uses postures and breathing to increase strength and flexibility.

Regular yoga practice can reduce levels of stress, relax you and help you to sleep better. Getting into a routine of practicing yoga can give you more energy, brighter moods and fewer negative feelings.

Below are two yoga poses to try. For each pose, hold each position for 30 seconds. Do this three times and then move on to the next pose.

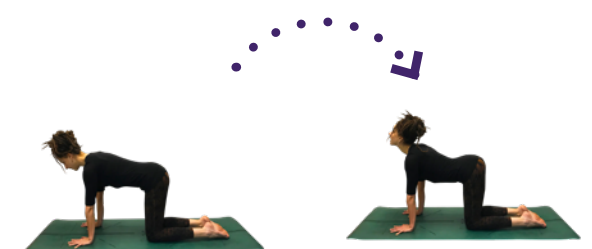
“A trophy carries dust. Memories last forever.”
Mary Lou Retton

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Side bends

- Reach over your head with your right arm and stretch to your left as you breathe out.
- Breathe in, bringing yourself back to the centre.
- Reach over your head with your left arm and stretch to your right, breathing out.
- Come back to the centre and smile!



Cat and cow

- Begin on your hands and knees with your back in a relaxed position.
- Breathe in, lifting your head and tail bone, and letting your belly drop towards the floor like a cow.
- Breathe out, pushing the floor away and rounding your back like an angry cat.
- Breathe in and lift your hips to the sky, straightening your arms and lowering your heels towards the floor.

Day 4 – Dance

Dance can improve mental health, reduce anxiety and depression, and provide opportunities to be social and express yourself.

Dance has lots of physical health benefits too, such as helping to improve your coordination, posture and balance. It keeps your body and brain active and provides a fun way to exercise and work your bones and muscles.

Put on your favourite tunes and try out each dance move below for one song!

“Champions keep playing until they get it right.”
Billie Jean King

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Wiping windows

- Hold your hands in front of you.
- Wave both hands over to the left.
- Now wave both hands over to the right - imagine that you're wiping windows or your arms are like windscreen wipers!
- Keep waving left and right, raising your arms up to the ceiling and then back down to the ground.



Starfish

- Reach your right arm up to the right.
- Reach your left arm up to the left.
- Bring your right arm down to your side.
- Bring your left arm down to your side.
- If you are standing, you can also step forward with your right foot as you lift your right arm and step back as you bring your arm down - and do the same with your left arm and left leg.

Day 4 - Dance

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Octopus

- Start with both arms down by your side.
- Using a floaty motion, lift your right hand up above your head.
- Bring your right arm back down, and lift your left hand up at the same time.
- Bring your left arm down, and repeat the whole action by lifting your right hand up again.
- You may want to sway side to side or wiggle your hips while you do the arm movements.



Flick and clap

- Shake or flick your hands forward once, as if you're shaking water off your hands.
- Clap your hands in front of you.
- Repeat!
- Be creative, flicking your hands and clapping in different directions - above your head, to the side, or down to the ground!
- If you want to move your feet, you can march or step on the spot as you move your hands.

Day 5 – Strength training circuit

Strength training involves resistance exercises that help your muscles to grow stronger. It helps to prevent muscular injuries and can be important for everyday tasks and different sports.

Below are four exercises to complete. For each exercise, repeat the movement 12-15 times and then rest for one minute. Do this three times and then move on to the next exercise.

“You have to believe in yourself when no one else does – that makes you a winner right there.”

Venus Williams

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Goblet squats

- Stand tall with your back straight, shoulders back and feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart.
- Hold a heavy object (such as a weight or water bottle) to your chest.
- Breathe out and bend your knees, imagining you are sitting on an imaginary chair.
- Stand up straight and then repeat 12-15 times.



Press ups

- Start on your hands and knees.
- Extend your legs back and keep your hands below your shoulders, slightly more than shoulder width apart.
- Keep your back straight and bend your elbows until your chest almost touches the floor.
- If you're finding it hard with your legs fully extended, keep your knees on the floor.
- Straighten your arms to return to your original position.
- Repeat 12-15 times.

Day 5 – Strength training circuit

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Shoulder press

- Kneel with one knee on the floor, keeping your back straight and squeezing your core muscles (around your stomach).
- In one hand, lift a weight or water bottle to the sky by straightening your arm, and breathe out.
- Breathe in and lower the weight to your original position.
- Repeat this movement 12-15 times with one arm, then switch to the other arm and do the same.



Bicep curls

- Stand tall with your back straight and shoulders back.
- Hold your arms by your side, with a weight or water bottle in one hand, facing outwards.
- Breathe in as you bend your elbow, lifting the weight to your shoulder. Keep your elbow tight to your body.
- Breathe out as you lower the weight back to your side.
- Repeat this movement 12-15 times with one arm, then switch to the other arm and do the same.

Day 6 – Balance and coordination circuit

Balance and coordination training is really important in helping to prevent injuries to your joints, and benefits all other forms of exercise.

Below are four exercises to complete. For each exercise, repeat the movement 6-8 times and then rest for one minute. Do this three times and then move on to the next exercise.

“Growth takes place outside of your comfort zone.”

Dawn Staley

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Superman

- Start with your hands and knees on the floor, shoulder width apart.
- Squeezing your core muscles and keeping your back straight, lift and straighten your left arm and right leg at the same time.
- Hold this position for 5 seconds.
- Return to your original position and repeat the movement with your other side.
- Continue repeating the movement, swapping sides each time, until you have done it 6-8 times on each side.



Lunge and trunk twist

- Stand tall and step forward with your right leg, bending at the knee.
- Your left leg will naturally bend with your right leg.
- Keeping your back straight, slowly bring your arms to your chest and turn to your left.
- Hold this position for 5 seconds.
- Return to standing and repeat the movement with your other side.
- Continue repeating the movement, swapping sides each time, until you have done it 6-8 times on each side.



Day 6 – Balance and coordination circuit

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Lying T-rotation

- Lie flat on your back with straight legs and your arms stretched out to the side so that you look like the letter 'T'.
- Keeping your left leg straight, bend your right leg and allow it to gently fall over your left leg.
- Turn your head to your right.
- Hold this position for 5 seconds.
- Return to your original position and repeat the movement with your other side.
- Continue repeating the movement, swapping sides each time, until you have done it 6-8 times on each side.



Straddle stretch

- Sit on the floor with your legs out straight in front of you.
- Slowly widen your legs into a V-shape.
- Squeeze your core muscles and slowly lean forwards until you feel the stretch down the back of both of your legs.
- Hold this position for 10 seconds.
- Return to your original position and repeat the movement 3 times.

What's next?

Working out at home is a great way to stay active. You can do it at any time in any weather, and you can use whatever amount of time you have – whether it's 5 minutes or 25 minutes!

It can help you to stay active during the current pandemic when other sports are not running. But it's also something you can keep doing when the restrictions lift.

Hopefully this toolkit has shown you how easy and fun it can be to get active at home. But this is only the start. There are loads of great ideas and links on our website to other online activities you might enjoy. To find out more, visit leonardcheshire.org/ShowMeYouCan

As restrictions begin to lift, you might want to try more sporting activities outside your home. Check out the Parasport website to find out what is happening near you: parasport.org.uk/find-an-opportunity



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