

Chair Tai Chi for Seniors

A seated 8-movement routine to print and follow at home • elderlydaily.com

Before you start - read this first

Check with a doctor before beginning if you have a heart condition, uncontrolled blood pressure, recent surgery or a fracture, severe arthritis, dizziness, or you have had a fall recently.

Stop straight away if you feel chest pain, sharp joint pain, breathlessness or dizziness.

Setting up your chair

- Use a **sturdy chair with no wheels and no swivel**. A dining chair beats an armchair - arms get in the way of the side movements.
- Sit toward the **front third of the seat** so your back is upright, not leaning into the backrest.
- **Feet flat and hip-width apart**, directly under the knees. If your feet do not reach the floor, put a book under them.
- Make sure the chair cannot slide - put it on a rug or against a wall on a hard floor.

How to breathe and how fast to move

- **Breathe in as the arms rise or open. Breathe out as they lower, push or close.** Never hold your breath.
- Aim for slow breaths of about 4 to 6 seconds. If you find yourself holding your breath, slow the movement down.
- **The slowness is the exercise.** Rushing removes most of the benefit.
- You should be able to hold a conversation the whole time. If you cannot, slow down rather than stop.
- Move only within a comfortable range. This is not a flexibility contest.

Warm-up (about 3 minutes)

Movement	What to do	Time
Settle the breath	Rest both hands on the lower abdomen. Breathe slowly and let the belly move.	1 min
Shoulder rolls	Roll both shoulders backward in slow circles, then forward.	30 sec
Neck turns	Turn the head slowly to look over one shoulder, then the other. No forcing.	30 sec
Wrist and ankle circles	Circle both wrists, then both ankles, in each direction.	1 min

The eight movements

#	Movement	What to do	Breath	Reps
1	Opening Form Wuji	Sit tall, feet flat and hip-width. Let both hands rest on your thighs. Slowly float both hands up to about chest height, palms down, then let them sink back down.	In as the hands rise, out as they sink	6 times
2	Cloud Hands Yun Shou	Hold both hands in front of you, one at chest height and one at waist height, palms facing you. Turn gently from the waist to one side, swapping the hands as you go, then turn to the other side.	Steady and even throughout	6 each side
3	Parting the Wild Horse's Mane Ye Ma Fen Zong	Bring both hands together in front of your chest as if holding a ball. Open the arms apart on a diagonal, one hand rising and one lowering, turning slightly from the waist. Return to the ball, then change sides.	In as you gather, out as you open	6 each side
4	White Crane Spreads Wings Bai He Liang Chi	From the same gathered position, raise one hand up beside your temple, palm out, while the other hand lowers gently to the side of the thigh. Hold a moment, then swap.	In as the hand lifts, out as it lowers	5 each side
5	Brush Knee and Push Lou Xi Ao Bu	Sweep one hand across above the thigh as if brushing the knee, while the other hand pushes slowly forward at about shoulder height. Draw the pushing hand back, then change sides.	Out as you push forward	5 each side
6	Grasp the Sparrow's Tail Lan Que Wei	Hold the ball again. Roll the forearms forward as if pressing something away, then draw them back toward you in a slow circle. Keep the movement round rather than straight.	In as you draw back, out as you press	6 times
7	Waving Hands in the Clouds Yun Shou (variation)	Extend both arms in front at about waist height. Raise one arm slowly as the other lowers, so the hands pass each other like a slow wave. Keep the shoulders down and relaxed.	Slow and continuous, do not hold	8 waves
8	Closing Form Shou Shi	Bring both hands slowly out to the sides and up, then let them float down the centre line and come to rest on the lower abdomen. Sit quietly for a few breaths.	In as the arms rise, out as they settle	3 times

Cool-down (about 2 minutes)

Let both hands rest on the lower abdomen and breathe naturally for a minute or two. Roll the shoulders once or twice. Sit quietly for a moment before you stand up - and stand slowly, using the chair for support if you need it.

A four-week plan

Week	Days	Length	What to practise
Week 1 - Learn	3 days	10 min	Warm-up, Opening Form, Cloud Hands, Closing Form
Week 2 - Build	4 days	15 min	Add Parting the Wild Horse's Mane and White Crane
Week 3 - Expand	4 days	15-20 min	Add Brush Knee and Push, and Grasp the Sparrow's Tail
Week 4 - Full routine	5 days	20 min	All eight movements, warm-up and cool-down

Rest days are part of the plan

Five days on and two off usually works better for older beginners than trying to practise every day. Consistency matters far more than length - a few movements most days beats one long session a week.

Educational guidance, not medical advice. Move within a comfortable range and check with a doctor before starting a new exercise routine. • Free printable from elderlydaily.com/seniors-daily/printable-chair-tai-chi-for-seniors