

## Keeping Body & Mind Fit During This Lockdown



by Emma Farrell, Training Coordinator & Social Media Manager



## The Meaning of Lockdown

If you google the meaning of the word 'Lockdown' the first two definitions you will be greeted with are the following:

"The confining of prisoners to their cells, typically in order to regain control during a riot."

And

"A state of isolation or restricted access instituted as a security measure"

The first one is very negative, but on a bad day during this difficult time for many, sometimes, (myself included) we do feel a bit like prisoners stuck in our cells. However, this is a very negative way of looking at the situation and the more we knuckle down and get through this hard time, the quicker we will get back into the real world again to do all the things we all love, and boy will that feel good again.

## Acceptance

As we know, the lockdown can unfortunately impact many who suffer with mental health conditions negatively. With this being said, we can't unfortunately change the situation we are in. In fact, for a bit of positivity and for those of you who struggle with anxiety (like myself) and perhaps fear of the unknown, if you actually try to accept the situation we are in, which may be very difficult, you will be surprised of its benefits.

Before we look at some key lockdown exercises for your mind and musculoskeletal system, I feel it is important to reflect on the word 'acceptance.'

Telling yourself I will accept what I cannot change may actually be your most powerful and effective choice during this period.

Why?

Acceptance in itself has many benefits.

Acceptance is an assertion of control, in that we are choosing our attitude and our actions.

Once we accept a situation, complete with the uncomfortable feelings this entails, we can shift our attention to what we need to do to live in accordance with our chosen values. We can let go of lamenting the problem and instead say to ourselves, "Okay, this is how it is. I see the situation clearly, and I may not like it, but what am I going to do about it?"

Also...

1. Acceptance helps us to become aware of our experience as it actually is, rather than how we would like it.
2. Acceptance supports our emotional and physical health.

1. Accepting our feelings helps us to know ourselves better.
2. Acceptance is a form of forgiveness
3. Acceptance contributes to inner peace.

For more information on this, please view: <https://blogs.psychcentral.com/cultivating-contentment/2018/08/14-benefits-of-practicing-acceptance/>

### Changing your Mindset

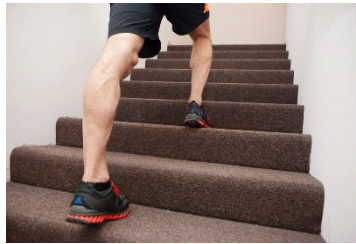
Now that we hope you are feeling a little bit more accepting of the situation, although we cannot change it, one thing we can change is our mindset.

One of the easiest ways of changing our mindset is by, you guessed it... Exercise!

"I can't do exercise, I'm stuck inside?" Right? ...Wrong.

At Osteopathic Solutions we have come up with some great BackSafe exercises to keep you mobile and fit during this difficult period. These exercises are for those of you who are strictly homebound, and perhaps don't have any outdoor space. As we know, we are allowed to take some exercise in the UK, but in my opinion, I feel if the UK knuckled down strictly for perhaps, a fortnight, without going out for family walks and potentially becoming carriers of the virus, we will all get out of this situation sooner. So embrace the indoors and follow and enjoy our indoor BackSafe Lockdown routine.

### Cardio from The Home: Stair Climbing



In my efforts to not come out of this Lockdown period feeling bloated and unhappy in my body, especially with bikini season around the corner, I recently decided I would take up Stair Climbing. I started this last week and have worked my way up to 25 (hard) minutes most evenings throughout the week. I am also very surprised of its benefits.

While most of us think of exercise as a 'sport', the scientific evidence shows it is activities like Stair Climbing that are most closely associated with improved health.

This exercise is recommended by doctors and health authorities worldwide because high-quality studies show:

- Climbing just 8 flights of stairs a day lowers average early mortality rate risk by 33%
- Seven minutes stair climbing a day can half the risk of heart attack over 10 years
- Just two minutes extra stair climbing a day is enough to stop average middle age weight gain.

Stair climbing delivers these benefits by improving our cardiovascular fitness. It is classed as a 'vigorous' form of exercise and burns more calories per minute than jogging.

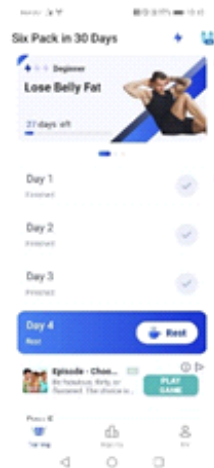
Furthermore...

By raising our heart rate, stair climbing helps protect against high blood pressure, weight gain and clogged arteries. This lowers the risk of developing chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, vascular dementia and even some cancers.

Stair climbing also exercises our bones and muscles, improving strength, bone density and muscle tone. This is especially important for women in sedentary office jobs (like myself) as we have a significantly higher osteoporosis risk than men.

Incidental physical activities like stair climbing are also associated with improved mental health. They cause our bodies to release endorphins, the so-called feel-good hormones. They also provide time to think and reflect - key factors in managing everyday stress and tensions.

## Core Stability Workout



As well as my stair workout, I decided to take a look at the app store on my phone for a free app to do some Core Stability workouts. All you need is an exercise matt, or something comfortable to place beneath yourself on the floor.

I choose the free app 'Six Pack in 30 Days' for obvious reasons!

I am finding this app good, as you can start off at a 'beginner – lose belly fat' level. I have chosen this one - see screenshot above. After completing this you can choose a more difficult and intense workout for another 30 days. There are three in total. Judging by the beginner level so far, I would imagine that after completing all three, combined with other home workouts listed in this blog, you would see some pretty decent results (considering we are all without gyms!)

Here are just some of the exercises from this app and their benefits.

## The Plank



Benefits of The Plank for your Core & Musculoskeletal System:

What if we told you practicing one pose everyday could improve your strength, physique, mood and more?

The almighty 'Plank' is a strength training pose that works all major abdominal muscles, while also strengthening your shoulders, chest, neck, glutes, quadriceps and back muscles. One of the key benefits of this exercise, is that it reduces back pain.

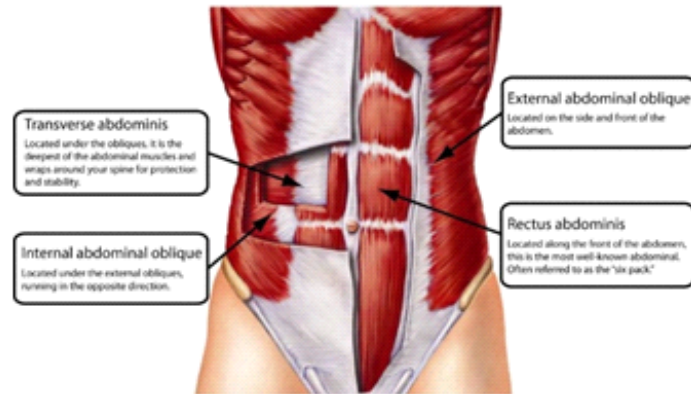
As your abdominal muscles become stronger, they provide your lower back with improved stability. Now that your abdominal muscles are stronger, everyday activities and exercise can be done with more lumbo-pelvic stability, which reduces pain in the lower back.

As well as this, doing The Plank regularly gives you better posture. Achieving better posture is most easily done by ensuring the spine, abdominal and upper body muscles are strong and healthy. As you practice The Plank pose, the back, chest, shoulders, abdominals and neck engage and work hard to adjust your body's natural alignment.

## Leg Raises



The lower abdominals (abs) and hips are areas that are the most challenging ones to lose excess fat fast. Luckily, leg raise exercise benefits include losing belly fat fast and strengthening the abdominal muscles (shown below).

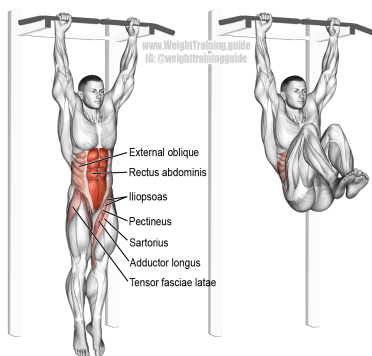


Below are the benefits of the leg raise exercise to the body:

1. Strengthens Core Muscles

Leg Raise exercises strengthen your lower abdominal muscles. Hanging Leg Raises target your lower and upper abdominal muscles, while floor Leg Raises burn fat in your lower abs.

Although these are challenging exercises for beginners, repetition will get your faster results!



Hanging Leg Raises



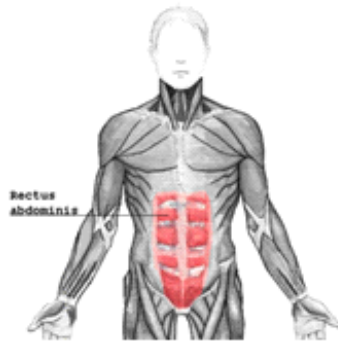
Floor Leg Raises

1. Improves Flexibility

All Leg Raise exercises improve the flexibility of your lower back (lumbar spine), pelvic and hip joints and abdominal muscles since they involve constant joint movements. They also improve your posture since every leg workout adds support to your mid-section.

1. Burns Calories Fast

In performing Leg Lifting exercises, your rectus abdominis is isolated from your body. Leg Lifting exercises tone your muscles, improve your form and burn a good 58 to 65 calories for every 10-15 minute leg raise workout. As a result, fat in the belly area is burned faster especially when paired with a healthy diet.



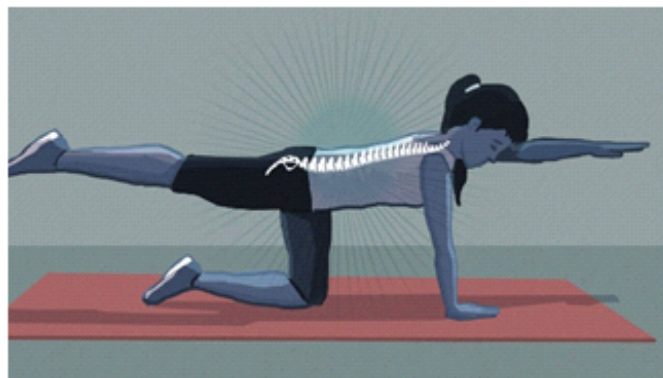
Cobra Stretch



This is one of the Stretching Exercises included at the end of the workout. The benefits of the Cobra Stretch include the following:

- Strengthens the Spine
- Stretches chest and lungs, shoulders and abdomen
- Firms the buttocks
- Helps relieve stress and fatigue
- Opens the heart and lungs
- Can help soothe sciatica (if tight hip flexors are related with the cause of the sciatica) . If you have osteoarthritis and /or spondylosis in the lower back joints take care when performing this exercise. If it increases pain down the back of the leg then avoid this exercise.
- Therapeutic for asthma

Pilates



While on the theme of Stretches, I am now going to run through some Pilates Exercises which are ideal to practice during this Lockdown Period. The benefits of Pilates include:

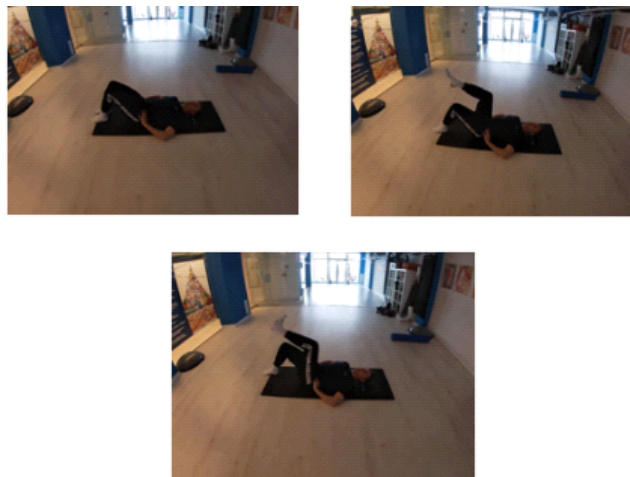
- Improved Flexibility
- Increased Muscle Strength and Tone
- Balanced Muscular Strength on both sides of your body
- Improved Stabilisation of Spine
- Improved Posture
- Rehabilitation or prevention of injuries related to muscle imbalances
- Improved physical coordination and balance
- Increased lung capacity and circulation through deep breathing and improved rib biomechanics
- Improved concentration
- Stress Management and relaxation

#### Key Pilates Exercises Beneficial for reducing Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs)

As taken from Osteopathic Solutions You Tube page

[www.youtube.com/channel/UCH\\_C42lim74URI4NQboifvg/playlists](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCH_C42lim74URI4NQboifvg/playlists)

#### Pelvic Tilt or Imprinting



This simple but effective form of exercise gets the deep core muscles switched on and builds strength in the support system of the spine.

Lay on your back in 'Neutral Spine' (relaxed back muscles and neutral spinal curves), knees bent and feet flat on the floor.

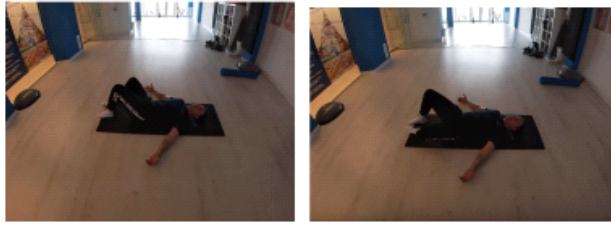
Breathe out and gently engage and "lift" pelvic floor muscles (those that stop you from urinating), then pull the navel in towards the spine so that the lower back is "imprinted" into the floor.

Breathe in and relax the muscles and return to Neutral Spine.

Pelvic tilt is an exercise to strengthen the lower back, glute muscles, lower abdominal muscles, and maintain hip muscle balance.



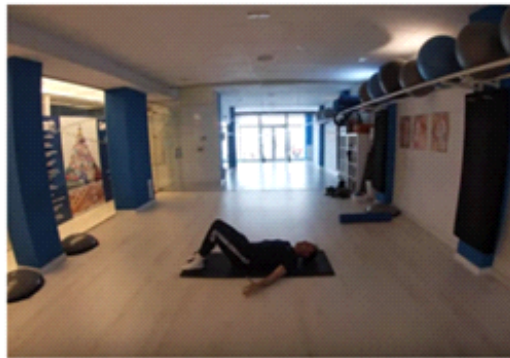
## Pilates Hip & Core Stability Exercises



Using controlled movements, gently move your legs out around 45 degrees, before moving them back in. We recommend 3 sets of letting your legs out 3 times each way. This exercise is great for aiding mobility and stability in the lower back.

These Pilates exercises are taken from our YouTube channel. You can view more on our Musculoskeletal Disorder & Rehabilitation YouTube Playlist here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URyDqeM2Eis&list=PLHB1yVFWTSoRCkyT9mkMUmCXe30-tqmr9>

## Lower Back & Gluteal Muscle Stretch

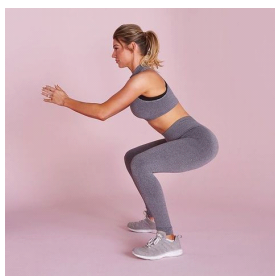


- Bring both legs up to the chest
- Hold for 20 seconds
- Repeat 3 times

## Leg Day



At the gym, I always have at least one day a week designated to legs. As I am not at the gym, and I have to make do with my home as a workout zone, I have started adding some squats into my weekly workout.



## A Few Major Benefits of Doing Squats:

### Squats help Build Muscle

They don't just help you to achieve wonderful, toned legs; they promote body wide muscle building by creating an anabolic (muscle-building) environment in the body. They work up your quadriceps, hamstrings, calves, abdominal muscles, lower back and bum too. Not many exercises can claim to recruit so many muscles at the same time.

### Squats Burn Calories Fast

Because they help you build muscle, you'll become more efficient at burning muscle so you can get that slimmer physique faster. Add weights to your squats and you'll burn calories even quicker.

### Squats help with Mobility & Balance

Strong legs are essential for staying mobile as you get older, and that's where squats come in. Not only do they develop leg strength, they also work your core spine stabilizing muscles. These muscles help you to maintain balance, while also improving the communication between your brain and your muscle groups, which helps prevent falls.

### Squats Improve Digestion & Circulation

An overlooked benefit of doing squats relates to circulation and digestion. The speed at which fluids travel through your body is improved when exercising your leg muscles, which allows more oxygen and nutrients to travel through your body's organs. This includes improvements to small intestine efficiency.

### Squats Keep Bones Strong

As squatting is a load bearing exercise, it helps with overall strength which is great for younger people, and also for older people who might have a low bone density. This strengthening will therefore help with injury prevention.

### Upper Body

While many upper-body exercises involve equipment like dumbbells and barbells, arm exercises without weights are a solid way to put your muscles to the test, too. After all, the weight of your body is equipment in its own right.

To be completely honest, it's hard to work all of the muscles in your arms without weights, so exercises without weights are only going to be able to target certain areas, primarily the tops of the shoulders (deltoids) and the triceps. Other arm muscles, like your biceps, typically need some external resistance to work against. But the exercises listed below are definitely useful for hitting some key muscle groups when you don't have access to equipment.



#### Forearm Plank Reachout

Start in a forearm plank position, with your elbows directly underneath your shoulders, hands facing forward so your forearms are parallel, core engaged, hips level, and legs extended straight behind you.

From this position, reach your right hand forward and tap the floor in front of you. Return your right hand to your starting position, and then reach forward with your left hand to tap the floor in front of you.

Continue to alternate sides as you focus on keeping your hips steady throughout.

Make it easier: If this exercise feels too challenging, take your feet wider than hip-width apart. The wider your feet, the easier the move should be.

#### Push Up



Start with a high plank with your palms flat, hands shoulder-width apart, shoulders stacked directly above your wrists, legs extended behind you, and your core and glutes engaged.

Bend your elbows and lower your chest to the floor. Drop your knees if needed.

Push through the palms of your hands to straighten your arms. That's 1 rep.

## Triceps Box Dip



Sit on the floor with your knees bent and feet flat and your box against a box or step. Place your hands on the box, fingers toward your body. If your box is high, like the one pictured here, place your hands on the box first, and then walk your heels out so you can comfortably lower your body in front of the box without hitting it.

Straighten your arms to lift your butt, then bend your elbows to lower yourself without sitting down completely. That's one rep.

Keep your heels on the floor and your elbows pointed directly behind your body.

## Bicep Curls



I was thinking about mentioning only upper body workouts that don't involve weights. I then thought to myself, that most of us have the following in our homes: tinned food, bags of rice, plastic water bottles, milk jugs. All of these items can be used as makeshift weights.

The most basic lifting exercise for working out your 'guns' is known as the bicep curl. Stand with your arms by your side as you hold the item in each hand. Your upper arms should be glued to your arms throughout the set.

Lift the jug in your right hand up in front of you as you breathe out, bringing it to your right shoulder. You should be flexing your right bicep as you lift, but only your forearm should be moving.

Once your right hand is in front of your right shoulder, squeeze hard and hold that position for a second, then inhale as you lower the jug all the way back down to its starting position at your side.

Do around 3 sets of 8-12 reps for this one.



Our Lockdown workout is complete! Please do let us know your feedback on this blog, or if, perhaps, you would like a follow up blog with some more varied exercises (after you have exhausted these ones that is!)

Feel free to share this with your friends and work colleagues who are also house bound. At Osteopathic Solutions, we can't stress enough how important it is during this hard period to include exercises like the above into your day.

You can thank us later 😊

Enjoy your Lockdown workout and remember to keep BackSafe from the team at Osteopathic Solutions.



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