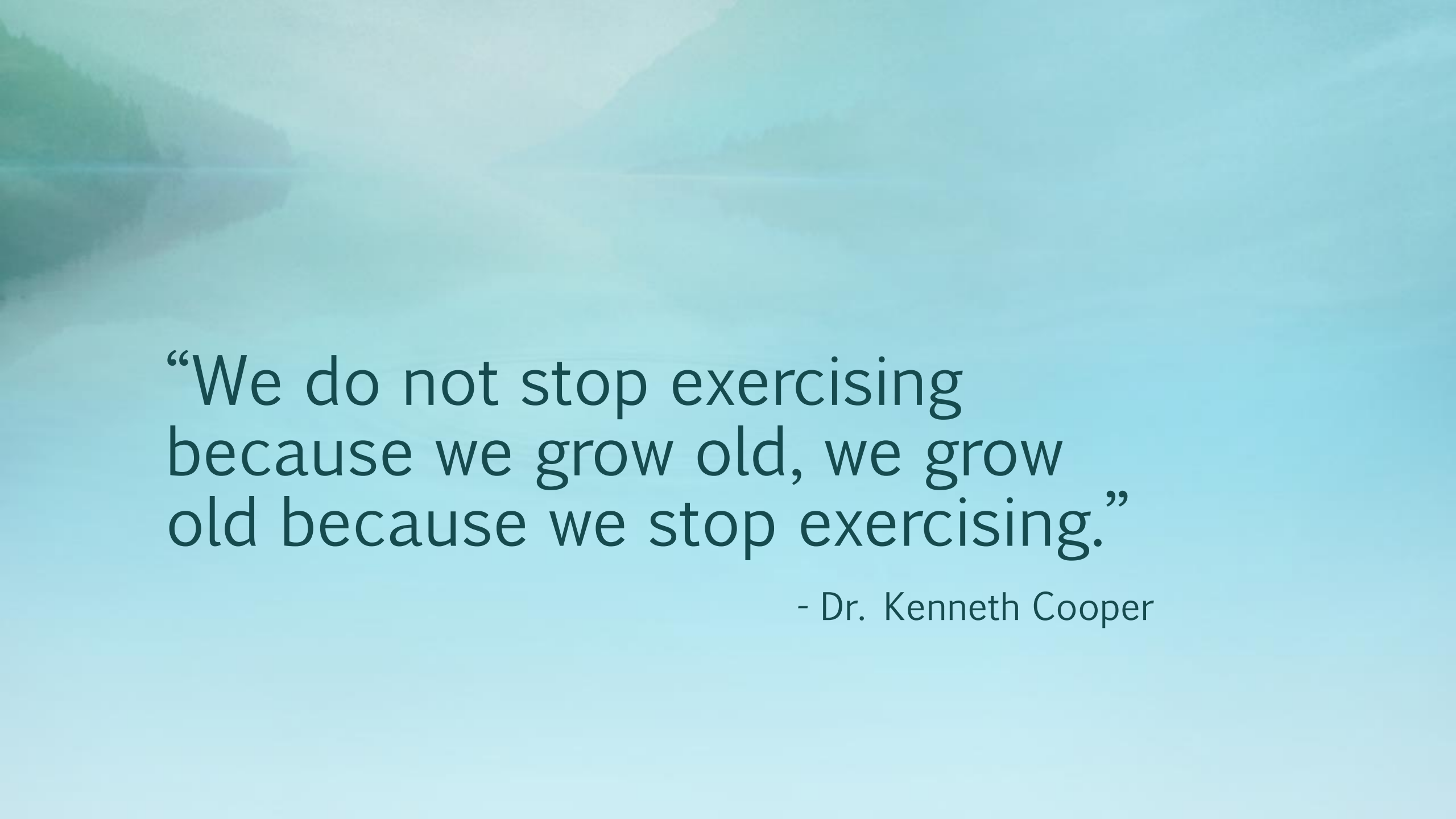


A serene landscape with misty mountains and a calm lake reflecting the scene. The mountains are covered in dense green forests, and the lake is still, creating a clear reflection of the surrounding scenery. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

# Strengthening Seniors

Growing Stronger One Step at a Time



“We do not stop exercising  
because we grow old, we grow  
old because we stop exercising.”

- Dr. Kenneth Cooper

As we age, we generally start becoming more sedentary. Because of this, we will naturally start losing muscle mass; which leads to less strength, greater trouble getting around, poorer balance, and decreased bone density ( - which makes the bones more fragile).

To ward off, or in some cases reverse, the outcomes of sedentary aging, we must incorporate the whole-body, anti-aging benefits of exercise!

You can't help  
getting older,  
but you don't have  
to get **old**.  
(GEORGE BURNS)



# Exercises to Improve Balance:

## 1. Heel to Toe:

It's done exactly how it sounds!

Stretch out your arms on either side of your body for balance, then try walking a short distance by placing one foot directly in front of the other in a heel to toe, heel to toe fashion. Try to do at least 5 – 10 steps.

Use a wall for balance at first if needed.



## 2. Standing Leg Raise:

Stand in front of a chair (or counter), and set your hands on it for balance if needed. Then, raise one leg out behind you, and stand steady on the anchoring leg for 10 seconds before lowering the leg. Repeat this 10 times on one leg, and then perform another 10 times, for 10 seconds each, on the other leg.



## 3. Side Leg Raises:

Stand in front of a chair (or counter) and set your hands on it for balance if you need it. Slowly raise your leg out to the side as high as you can without sending your body leaning in the opposite direction, and then slowly lower your leg back down. Repeat this exercise 5 times on each side.

It's important to keep your body vertical (not leaning one way or another) with your abs sucked in tight while doing these exercises.

Try to do these exercises every day, and see if you can add repetitions as you get stronger.

# Exercises to Improve Strength:

## 1. Wall Pushups:

Stand about 2 feet in front of a wall and place your arms, level with your chest, onto the wall. Keep your back straight, and stomach muscles tight, as your body leans towards the wall with the bending of your elbows.

Aim to do 10 pushups at a time, with a 30 - 40 second rest before doing another 10 reps. (If this exercise hurts your wrists, feel free to clench your hands into fists and place your knuckles on the wall, instead of laying your hands flat on the wall.) This exercise will build your arm, chest and shoulder muscles.



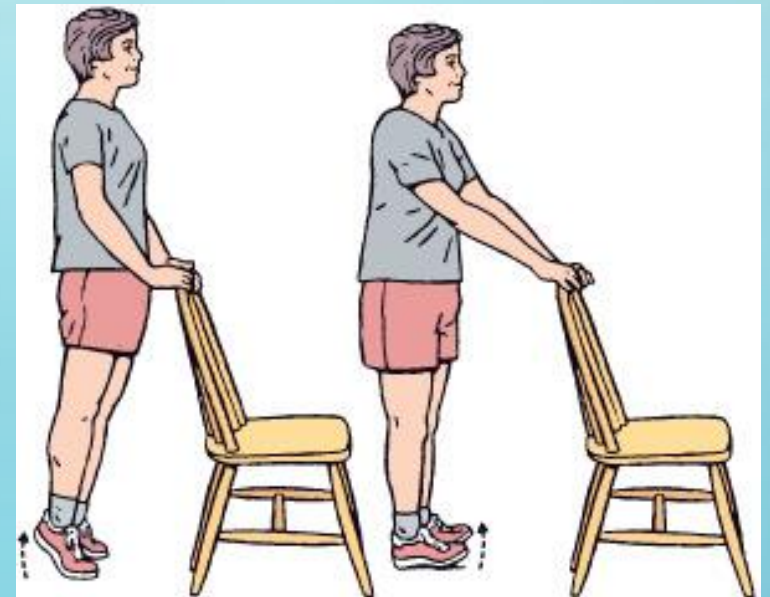
## 2. Heel and Toe Raises:

Stand straight and tall with your stomach sucked in tight (with a chair or counter in front of you for balance, if needed).

Raise yourself onto your tip toes, then with control, lower yourself back down. And then rock back on your heels so that your toes are off the ground and pointed towards the ceiling, and then return your feet flat to the ground.

Repeat 5 times, and then rest for 40 seconds before attempting to do another 5 reps.

This exercise will build your calf and shin muscles.



# Exercises to Improve Strength Cont.

## 1. Core Slimming Twists:

Sit straight and tall in a chair that does not have arm rests, and make sure your stomach muscles are pulled in tight.

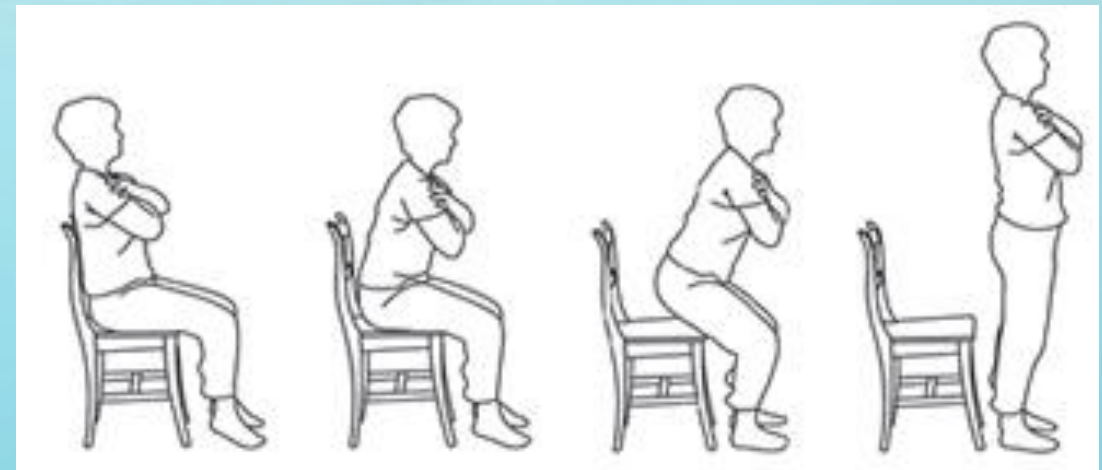
Hold onto a medicine ball or 2lb – 10lb weight (depending on what you're comfortable with – start with a smaller weight or canned good if you're not sure), and turn from the center to one side, then back to the center, and then on to the other side. Keep those stomach muscles tight throughout each turn - and don't forget to breathe! Try for 10 turns (5 on each side) before taking a 30 second rest.



## 2. Chair Sit to Stand:

Sit straight in a chair, with your stomach muscles pulled in tight (use a chair with arms at first, so that you can hold onto them for extra support if needed).

Place your feet a hip's width apart (like the first seated illustration on this page), and make sure that your feet are close to the legs of your chair – not far out in front of them, but almost touching them. Root your heels into the ground and keep your back straight as you stand up securely. Steadily sit back down and repeat this move 5 times. This will help build your leg strength.



# Cardiovascular and Aerobic Exercises:

Exercises that improve heart strength, and overall body function-ability and health. Some of these include:

Tennis



Swimming



Bicycle Riding



Dancing



Walking



Jogging



Aim to do at least 30 minutes of these types of exercises, at least 5 days a week!

# Stretches:

It's a great idea to stretch out after you've warmed up your body with some cardio or strength building exercises, or when you've just gotten out of a hot shower or bath – because when your muscles are warmed they are more flexible.

## 1. Calf Stretch:

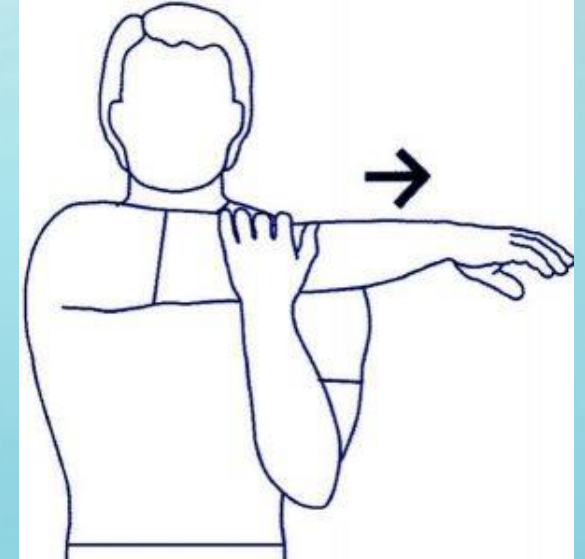
Stagger your stance – one leg in front of you, and one behind - and place your hands on a wall or the back of a chair for balance. Lean forward over your front leg, being sure to keep both feet flat on the ground. You should feel a nice stretch in your back leg's calf. Hold for 10 – 30 seconds. Repeat the stretch 1 – 3 times on each leg.



Remember to steadily breathe in and out during each stretch, and don't hold your breathe!

## 2. Across the Body Arm Stretch:

Sit or stand with your back straight and stomach muscles tight. Reach one arm across your chest, and with the other arm, gently pull the outstretched arm towards your body until you feel a stretch in your shoulder and upper back. Hold the stretch for 10 – 30 seconds before releasing. Repeat 1-3 times. Repeat on the other arm.





# Stretches Cont.

## 1. Seated Hamstring Stretch:

Sit on the edge of a sturdy chair, and hold onto its sides for balance. Keep one leg bent with your foot anchored to the floor, and stretch the other leg out in front of you with your toes pointing towards the ceiling. Lean forward slightly until you feel a nice stretch through the back of your outstretched leg. Hold the stretch for 10 – 30 seconds, and repeat 1 – 3 times. Repeat stretch on the other leg.



## 2. Seated Hip Stretch:

Sit straight and tall towards the edge of a solid chair. Keep one foot on the ground as an anchor, and place your other foot across the anchoring leg's thigh. Gently lean forward until you feel a stretch in the hip of your top leg. Hold the stretch for 10 – 30 seconds, and repeat the stretch 1 – 3 times. Repeat the stretch on the other leg.



# For Best Results:

Start by choosing exercises and stretches from each category to do each day.

For example, try incorporating:

- One balance exercise
- One strength exercise
- One cardio exercise
- Then stretch appropriately according to the muscles that you've worked

You could try exercising for a sustained period of time and then finish up with some stretches; or you could break up your exercise routine to be a few minutes here and there throughout your day, and also stretch appropriately after each instance. It's completely up to you and what fits best with your schedule!

For a more fun time exercising:

- Invite a friend to join you
- Play great songs that pump you with energy while you workout
- Exercise in a beautiful place (like the park!)

Try keeping a little fitness notebook where you can mark out how strong you were when you started exercising (how far you could walk; how much weight you could lift when you first started, etc.), you'll be encouraged when you look back and see how you've progressed! - You can also use this to encourage others!

Feel free to look on YouTube for more ideas of fun workout videos or stretch demonstrations.

Be sure to check with your doctor before doing any new exercises or stretches, to make sure that you will be alright to start implementing them into your everyday life.

And remember...

Physical training is like farming. Much of the work that produces it is **UNSEEN**. No one is applauding or even recognizing our efforts. But the life it creates can be used by God to **BLESS** and **SERVE** many. The “planting” is grueling; the **HARVEST** can be great.

- Gary Thomas “Every Body Matters”



Healing Hands  
Health Center