Coordination Edition



British Gymnastics Foundation

Love to Move

Try our age and dementia friendly chair-based gymnastics programme.

A guide to help you in your own home.

SPORT ENGLAND
LOTTERY FUNDED

www.britishgymnasticsfoundation.org
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"I thought the programme would, at best, just be able to slow down the rate of dementia progressing, but I am actually finding that some participants appear to be regaining functions which were thought to be lost."

Kim Hall, Lead Coach

British Gymnastics Foundation

Love to Move



Welcome

Love to Move is a chair-based age and dementia friendly gymnastics exercise programme, developed by the British Gymnastics Foundation.

Specially designed to get older people moving and functioning better, the programme is proving particularly beneficial for people living with dementia.

This booklet will give you an insight in to the structure and history of the programme; as well as helping you and your family experience and enjoy some of the key coordination exercises from the programme in the comfort of your own home.

If you want to find out more, visit **britishgymnasticsfoundation.org**

History of Love to Move

In 2014 we began working with experts in Japan who deliver their own age and dementia friendly gymnastics programme. Their programme has been so successful that it is now completely state funded, taking place in every care home across the country.

Research published in 2016 on the original Japanese programme concluded that it significantly improves walking speed. The programme has also been shown to:

- improve cognitive function
- help reduce depression in participants
- improve balance
- improve the ability to undertake activities for daily living

Two years ago we began delivering **Love to Move** in multiple care homes and community settings in the UK. To date, the programme has been delivering life-changing outcomes for many participants.



The **Love to Move** programme has helped some participants to use their hands again so they can feed themselves, do crafts, play bingo and socialise with friends and family. One lady who began taking part in the programme twice a week has since regained her independence and moved back home.

Lead programme coach, Kim Hall has worked with the British Gymnastics Foundation team to continue to develop the **Love to Move** programme. Kim has almost 30 years' experience in adapting gymnastics for disabled people and has worked as a coach, a physiotherapist and has been trained in dance for those living with dementia over the years. She also has personal experience of family members living with the pain of dementia. This gives her an understanding and insight into how dementia affects the everyday lives of people and families affected by the condition.

Why try Love to Move?

Our **Love to Move** programme is specially designed to get older people moving and functioning better. As well as this, there are so many other benefits of the programme helping to improve the lives of people living with dementia:

- **Social Interaction**
  Whether taking part in a care home or community setting, or at home with a loved one, the fun and enjoyment of **Love to Move** makes the programme so much more effective. The exercises are enjoyable to do and encourage conversation.

- **Memory stimulation**
  Trying the exercises in time to your favourite music can help to stimulate memory and recall in people living with dementia.

- **Use of foundation gymnastics skills**
  The movements used during **Love to Move** exercises help to develop coordination, balance, core strength and flexibility to name just a few of the many benefits.



Vinal Karania, Research Manager (Evaluation and Impact), Age UK
"It has a demonstrable benefit in the physical, emotional and cognitive aspects of older people. Older people having mild to advanced forms of dementia appear to benefit the most."



Gill, daughter of a participant taking part in the Love to Move sessions
"You can't believe the difference; I mean it's just priceless. For all the therapy she's had, this has been the thing that's worked for her. She's 93 and now she's wanting to learn to stand so she can go home in the car. We just feel lucky to have had the opportunity to do it because it's made such a difference."



Doug, participant of the Love to Move programme
"I feel stronger. I have difficultly moving, but I've started to move more than I was before."

Exercising at home
Safety

Performing the coordination exercises from the **Love to Move** programme can be very beneficial for older people and this type of chair-based exercise can be done at home or in small groups and is easy to fit in to your daily routine.

The **Love to Move** coordination exercises are gentle and easy to follow. However, you may want to get the all-clear from a doctor before starting.





1. For these exercises choose a chair which is stable and solid. If using a wheelchair, make sure the brake is on.
2. Wear loose, comfortable clothing and have some water available.
3. If possible, you should sit tall with your feet flat on the floor and knees bent at right angles.
4. Try to do these coordination exercises at least twice a week to get the most benefit from them.
5. Build up slowly and aim to gradually increase the repetitions of each exercise over time.
6. Set realistic goals for yourself. When first attempting these coordination exercises, you may aim to do them for just 10 minutes; if you achieve your goal without tiring too much, you can then reassess your goal and increase the time you do the exercises for.

The coordination exercises within this booklet have been expertly designed and have been delivered in complete safety to thousands of people. However, when exercising at home on your own or with others, you must take responsibility for your own safety. If you experience any noticeable changes in your health, mobility or experience pain, this should prompt you to contact your doctor. British Gymnastics Foundation accepts no liability for your own personal safety when exercising.

The content in this booklet should not be treated as a substitute for the medical advice of your doctor.

Coordination exercises
Alternate hand rotations

1 Place your hands on your knees. Turn one palm to face upwards and one palm to face downwards.



2 Alternate the palm which faces upwards. Try this action 20 times.





Coach Kim says:

"Try doing these alternate hand rotations in time with the beat of some of your favourite music as part of your morning routine. You could also make this coordination exercise in to an interactive activity by facing a partner and working together."

Coordination exercises
Finger and thumb tapping



1 Tap each of your fingers in turn with your thumbs and then return to the start of the sequence. Begin by touching your **index** fingers with your thumbs.



2 Touch your **middle** fingers with your thumbs.



3 Touch your **third** fingers with your thumbs.



4 Touch your **little** fingers with your thumbs. Complete this sequence 10-20 times.



Coach Kim says:

"This exercise is great for improving finger dexterity and hand coordination. To provide an extra challenge when you are ready, try changing the sequence of finger taps and experiment with a different sequence on each hand at the same time."

Coordination exercises
Nose and ear grabbing

1 Grab your nose with your left hand whilst grabbing your left earlobe with your right hand. Make sure to grab your ear and nose with a light touch using your index finger and thumb.



2 Clap your hands.



3 Repeat the nose and ear grabbing from the first step, but this time grab your nose with your right hand and your right earlobe with your left hand.



Coordination exercises
Drawing triangles and sticks

1 Practice drawing a stick with both hands

- Starting at the top, use your hands or index fingers to draw a stick vertically downwards.
- Then return to the top.
- Each stick requires you to perform two movements.
- Practice this action several times with your left hand mirroring the actions of your right hand.



2 Practice drawing triangles with both hands

- Starting at the top, use your hands or index fingers to draw right angle triangles.
- Then return to the starting position at the top.
- Each triangle requires you to perform three movements.
- Practice this action several times with your left hand mirroring the actions of your right hand.



3 Once you've mastered mirroring each side of your body with your stick and triangle drawing, it is time to try and do some bilaterally asymmetrical actions:

- For a count of six, starting with both hands at the top, draw three sticks with one hand and two triangles with the opposite hand.
- On the 6th count, both hands should return to the starting position at the top!

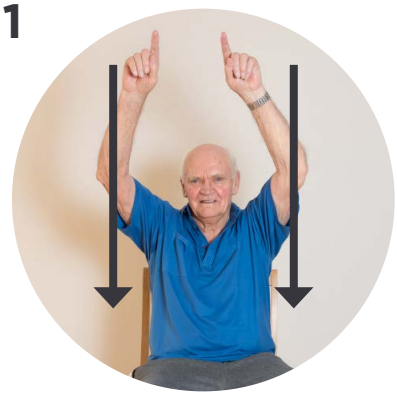


Start position

You can make the action of drawing triangles and sticks as small or as big as you like. Just make sure you are sitting nice and tall with your feet flat on the floor.

Once you have done the exercise one way, why not challenge yourself even more by swapping the sides for the triangles and sticks.

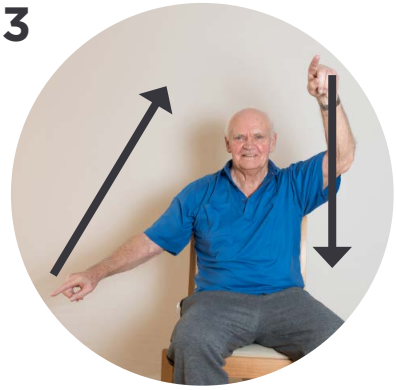
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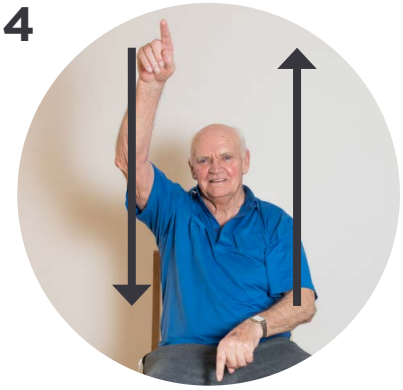
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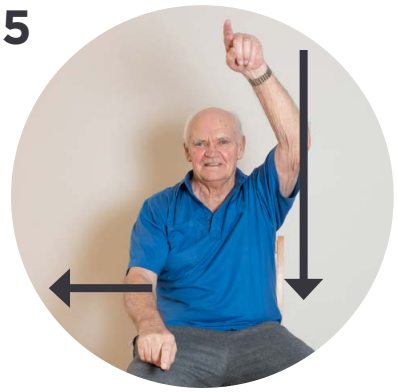
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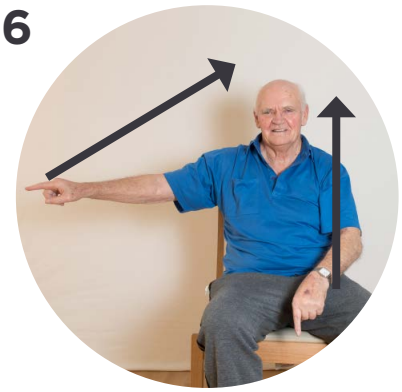
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Coach Kim says:

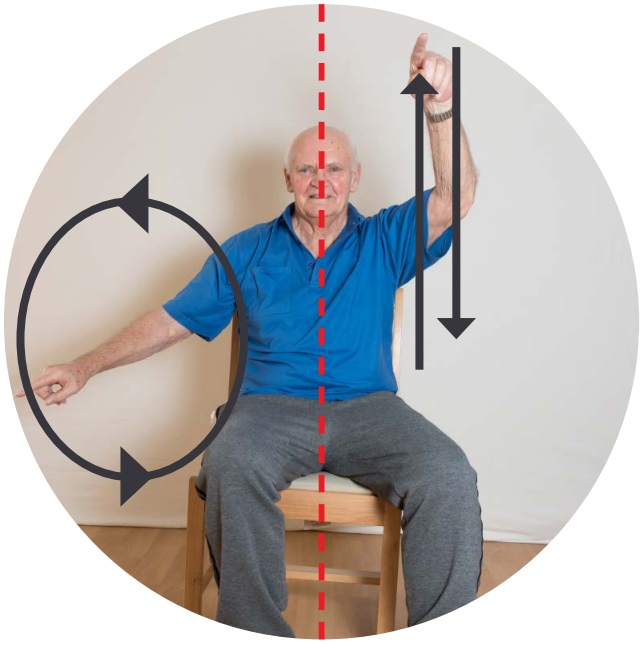
"Congratulations! You are now trying a very complex coordination exercise. Remember, it doesn't matter if you don't master this exercise, the most important thing is that you have fun trying it! Your brain will be working hard to try and coordinate your actions, which has a beneficial effect."

The science behind Love to Move

Love to Move incorporates a number of key components, but the science behind the programme provides the real unique aspect of it, and is one of the main reasons it works. The programme uses bilaterally asymmetrical movement patterns, which is where the left side of the body's movements do not mirror the right side of the body's movements.

Bilateral asymmetry:
If you draw an imaginary line down the centre of your body from head to toe (the body's mid-line), the actions you create on the left side of your body will be different to the right side of your body.

Almost every part of the **Love to Move** programme is based on bilaterally asymmetrical movement patterns. This is understood to benefit older people and those with dementia and mild cognitive impairment, by enabling the left side and right side of the brain to process information independently, thus improving cognitive function, coordination and the ability to carry out activities of daily living more independently.



Drawing sticks and circles
An example of a bilaterally asymmetrical movement pattern

Performing bilaterally asymmetrical movement patterns may be important in increasing your brain's **cognitive reserve.**

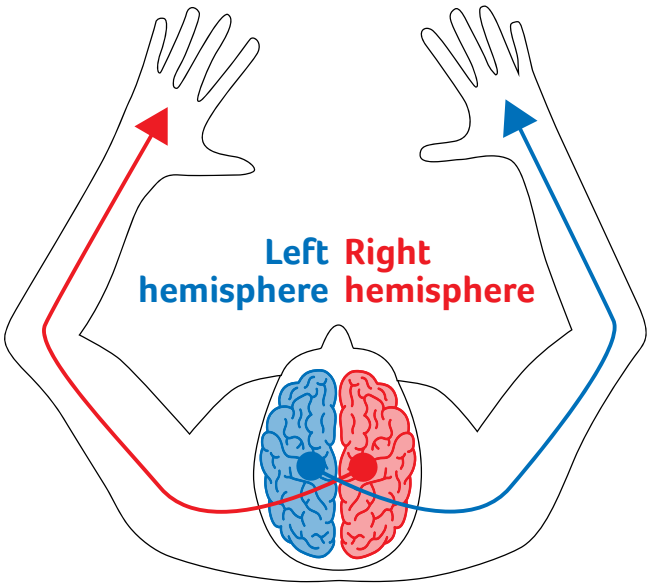
An increased cognitive reserve makes our brains more resilient to the effects of brain diseases like Alzheimer's. With an increased cognitive reserve, your brain should be able to process everyday tasks more easily as the brain will utilise many more neurons and work more efficiently.

The *Alzheimer's Society* say; there is increasing evidence that building up cognitive reserve over time can reduce the risk of developing dementia (**alzheimers.org.uk**).

This programme can be beneficial for everyone, not just those who are already living with dementia.

It is believed that doing these exercises can result in an increased number of connections between neurons; helping you to keep functioning when brain disease strikes.

Each hemisphere controls the opposite half of the body





Coach Kim says:

"At some point in your life, you will probably all have done patting your head whilst rubbing your tummy; these types of actions are all bilaterally asymmetrical and can be fun to try with all members of your family."

The charity behind Love to Move

We believe that gymnastics has the power to transform lives; but for so many people in real need, accessing gymnastics may feel impossible.

The British Gymnastics Foundation is changing this.

We exist to create opportunities through gymnastics, to transform the lives of people living with dementia, disabilities and families going through financial and personal crisis.

In connection to the governing body, British Gymnastics, we have 130 years of proven experience. Gymnastics empowers people, developing in them a greater strength and confidence; helping them to achieve more than they thought was possible. We love seeing the amazing changes that gymnastics can create.



British Gymnastics Foundation

Anna's Story

Anna had always enjoyed gymnastics, but following the death of her mother, from leukaemia, her dad was left to care for her and her three sisters. Struggling to cope, he turned to the British Gymnastics Foundation: "We lost her mum two years ago and it really hit Anna hard as you'd expect. She's always wanted to do gymnastics but the situation made it difficult."

The British Gymnastics Foundation, due to their Hardship Grants Programme, were able to pay for two terms for Anna to attend a club close to home.

The Hardship Grants Programme provides financial assistance to British Gymnastics members to help them continue participating in gymnastics, and Anna is delighted that she can carry on taking part in the sport she loves: "I feel happy because gymnastics is fun. I feel more confident and have lots of friends. I feel special and lucky doing something I love. Mummy would be proud of me."

From 2016-2017 the British Gymnastics Foundation have helped 76 individuals to stay in gymnastics by assisting them through a time of crisis.



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Love to Move

Acknowledgements

The British Gymnastics Foundation would like to thank all of the people and organisations that have donated over the years; without which, the **Love to Move** programme would not be possible. We would also like to thank all of the participants who have taken part in the programme to date. The heart-warming stories of family members that have seen incredible changes in their loved ones due to the programme, gives us all the encouragement we need to expand it wider.

Over the course of the next two years we are hoping to expand our **Love to Move** programme across the UK, ensuring that it is accessible to more people, allowing more people to benefit.

If you would like to find more information about **Love to Move**, or if you have used this booklet, we would love to hear from you. Please email **info@britishgymnasticsfoundation.org**

If you would like to help us to expand the programme, you can donate by visiting our website **www.britishgymnasticsfoundation.org**

All donations go directly to the **British Gymnastics Foundation.**

British Gymnastics Foundation

Love to Move



Coach Kim says:

“Having fun during any exercise is key; involving your family in these coordination exercises can really help you to get the most enjoyment and benefit from the programme.”

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