Stay fit for life



I've helped thousands of people lead more active lives now let me help you!

Julie Robinson - Fitness Expert



"These Move it or Lose it! exercises will allow you to take control and turn the clock back."

Professor Janet Lord, world-leading researcher in active ageing

Foreword by - Professor Janet Lord

Director of The Centre for Healthy Ageing Research at University of Birmingham

We are an ageing society -

birth rates are falling and life expectancy is increasing at two years per decade. This would be great news if it were not for the fact that the time we spend in good health is not keeping pace and on average a woman can now expect to be unwell for the last 10 years of her life and for a man this is 6 years.

What has become clear in the last decade is that a major cause of this ill health is the reduced physical activity and increased sedentary time in older adults - less than half of adults over 65 meet the recommendations for physical activity and for over 85 years olds this is less than 1 in 10.



The good news is that we can do something about these gloomy statistics and importantly it is never too late to start. Even if you are already beginning to struggle with daily tasks such as getting out of a chair or going up stairs, the *Move it or Lose it!* book and the exercises described here will allow you to take control and turn back the clock!

Importantly each exercise is based on sound research that has shown benefits for physical ability and helping people to keep doing those daily tasks that allow us to stay independent. The book is also packed with additional health tips and interesting facts – which altogether will help to ensure that your old age is "Enjoyed and not Endured".

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Move it or Lose it! The journey so far...

You may want to know how this all began, my background and the reasons for wanting to write this book.

After my degree I started my working life as a Physical Education teacher working with teenagers in Wolverhampton who were mainly very reluctant to go out in the cold and play hockey. Fortunately it coincided with the advent of Jane Fonda style aerobics and pop music, stripey leotards and legwarmers, which really appealed to the teenage girls in my care. They would work harder in our 'dance' sessions than they ever would out on the playing field mainly because it didn't 'feel' like exercise.

Throughout my work as a teacher and also my experience of running a dance studio taking several classes a day, I quickly learnt how important it was to find a way to motivate people to enjoy exercise; a skill which has proved to be vital in my current role as a *Move it or Lose it!* Instructor.

In 2007 I decided to leave teaching and take a new direction to work with older people instead of children. My ageing parents were facing many challenges (such as rheumatoid arthritis, stroke and dementia) and despite my knowledge of anatomy and physiology, I felt at a loss knowing what to do to help. Like most daughters and sons who care for their parents, I was concerned that I might do more harm than good by getting them to exercise; if only I'd known then what I know now!

After re-training I set up my first community class and just hoped people would turn up. Soon my classes were filling up and I got some community funding to buy equipment and cover the cost of venue hire. Things went from strength to strength and I was soon turning down new classes or passing them onto other instructors. The recipe for success was to make the sessions so much fun that those attending didn't realise they were exercising. After a few weeks of attending, my class members would start to notice the benefits such as being able to walk around the supermarket without feeling exhausted, or having the confidence to climb stairs – the kind of things that really made a difference to their quality of life.



Since 1996 I have been a volunteer for Breakthrough Breast Cancer, raising awareness and funds (edging closer to £1 million now) for a charity very close to my heart. I was also really keen to promote the benefits of keeping active to those going through treatment, so I began taking small groups at St Giles Hospice helping people relax and revitalise. It was inspiring to see iust what a difference it could make - both physically and mentally - to people who were very frail and fatigued. This led on to taking exercise sessions for people with multiple sclerosis and working closely with the hospice on other community projects. I realised that I could make a difference to the quality of life for people who fear exercise. whatever their age or condition. This really is the most rewarding job in the world!

It soon became apparent that everyone wanted to stay healthy and maintain their independence; they just needed some help, encouragement and knowledge of what to do. I was asked over and over again for something to help remind them what we did in class and so I decided to make a DVD to replicate the routines.

I asked all my class members for suggestions for the DVD title and Move it or Lose it! was voted as their favourite. I asked six class members to join me on set to show others that this was made by real people for real people - it was bringing the exercise class into peoples' homes. With no marketing budget, sales were slow at first but the feedback was great and little by little word began to spread. Then Yours Magazine gave us a mention and sales rocketed. It was obvious that there was a real need for this and people I hadn't even met were really benefiting; their messages of thanks were humbling which made me even more determined to help more people.

I was really keen to get the approval of an expert to reassure people that the exercises were safe and effective so I met with Professor Janet Lord, Director of The Centre for Healthy Ageing Research at University of Birmingham. Janet was equally passionate about promoting the benefits of exercise and saw the DVD as a useful practical resource especially for those who couldn't get to a class.

Janet suggested I make a second DVD to incorporate some standing exercises as a progression from the seated routines and this led onto three more *Move it or Lose it!* DVDs. I became more involved in the Centre's work helping them to translate their research at grass roots level and, together with the Falls and Fracture Team at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, we made the 'Put Pep in your Step' DVD based on a validated programme of exercises to help improve strength and balance. Many of these exercises are incorporated into this book.

My passion is to take the *Move it or Lose it!* message across the UK so that people can access classes in their local communities and enjoy the experience of socialising and exercising together. Now, we have a nationally recognised qualification to train people in becoming exercise instructors and set up classes in their local community. Our instructors don't just deliver the exercises, they create an atmosphere of fun and inclusivity to help motivate and inspire, ensuring everyone works at their individual level to achieve as much as they can.

I now write regular columns for two national magazines (Yours and People's Friend) and often contribute to online forums such as Gransnet. I have found that the thousands of people I have taught, and the millions who read my columns, they all want to know what exercises they can do to keep them mobile and enjoying life. And so this book is an easy-to-follow manual to take you through the most important exercises, step by step, which can be done at home and are designed to fit in to your busy lifestyle. You can do just 20 minutes a day and still make a difference, so let's get moving!



BEFORE YOU START



You're bound to have some questions before you start - so here's what you need to know.

Is it safe?

The exercises in this book are specifically designed for older people or those with restricted mobility. You will be reassured to know that many of the exercises are from an evidence-based programme (which means they've been researched, tried and tested). However it is impossible to say that all exercises are safe for all people; that is why it's recommended that you check with your doctor before you start, especially if you have any health problems. It's a good idea to take this book along to show your GP – I'm sure they will be pleased to know that you are keeping active!

Why should I exercise?

Do you want to cut your risk of developing diabetes, heart disease and osteoporosis? Maybe shed unwanted pounds? Or do you just want to keep as mobile as you can to ensure you can keep doing the things you enjoy? Then keeping your muscles strong is the most important thing you can do as you age.

From the age of 30, the number of muscle cells in our bodies begin to decrease, but we can combat this by doing activities which involve resistance, or working against a load to ensure we keep (or even improve) our muscle mass. This doesn't mean you have to join a gym and pump iron...it's anything that requires strength such as climbing stairs or carrying bags of shopping.

If we don't use our muscles they shrink, but if we exercise our muscles they can get stronger; don't worry, you won't turn into a body builder unless you work out at extreme levels!

Of course, we want to keep our heart and lungs working efficiently for cardiovascular fitness, but walking, jogging or dancing may be difficult unless you have the basic muscle strength first. The exercises in this book can help you build strong foundations on which you can build your fitness and mobility - like a stepping-stone on the road to good health and wellbeing.

How will this benefit me?

Exercise is amazing as the benefits are so far reaching - if only we could bottle it! Exercise can:

- improve your cardiovascular fitness
- improve your balance and co-ordination
- help you to increase your levels of activity
- improve your flexibility and mobility
- help to prevent or slow osteoporosis
- decrease your risk of falling*
- help you to stay independent by improving your ability to perform daily tasks
- make you feel better physically and emotionally
- help you to sleep better
- help vou to look better
- help prevent dementia
- improve your immune function
- improve your digestion and prevent constipation

*Although chair-based exercises don't work specifically on balance, they can improve your lower limb strength to allow you to access balance classes, such as Tai-chi and Otago.

Am I too old to exercise?

You can exercise at any age as long as it's appropriate for you. You need to work at a level of intensity that is suitable for you and if it is painful then stop.

If you have always been fit and physically active there's no reason to stop doing what you enjoy. A good example of this is the world's oldest woman, Jeanne Calment who lived to be 121: she took up fencing at 85 and still rode her bicycle every day at 100!

If you want to try something new, that's great, but remember to progress gradually. This really is where the phrase 'don't run before you can walk' rings true! Also you will need to spend longer warming up before you begin and cooling down at the end of any activity, but that will be explained in the practical section of the book.

Does exercise have to be painful to be effective?

Forget the "No pain - no gain" mantra! Of course, if you're a competitive athlete, then you have to work at extreme levels to progress, but for older people or those who are not used to exercise, it's not wise to work through pain.

However, it is natural to feel a bit achy after you've done something new or worked your muscles harder than normal. Think of when you've been gardening and your back aches afterwards, or your legs might be a bit sore if you've been for a longer walk than normal.

When you do the resistance band exercises in this book you may find the same thing happens - if this goes off within a day or two that's good; it shows you are responding to the training. The thing to avoid is working through sharp pain, remember to take it steady at first and progress gradually.

How hard should I work when I exercise?

The Department of Health exercise guidelines say that older adults should work at a moderate intensity, but what does that mean? The simplest way to understand this is by using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is sitting still and 10 is sprinting at full speed. Moderate intensity would be around 4 to 6, which is unique to each person.

So for one person, No 5, on the scale would be playing a leisurely game of tennis. For someone else No 5 on the scale could be walking around the supermarket.

As you do these exercises or activities think about where you would be on the scale; remember this is unique to you.



It's normal to feel warmer and breathe harder as you increase the intensity of your workout, but if you have chest pain, severe breathlessness, dizziness or sudden pain then stop and seek medical advice.



LET'S GET READY!







Before you begin just go through this checklist:

- Wear loose comfortable clothes so you can move without restriction
- Wear good supportive footwear, such as trainers or flat shoes
- Make sure you are not exercising straight after eating wait at least 45 minutes
- Make sure the room is not too hot and you have a drink handy still water is recommended
- · Have a strong chair, ideally without arms, placed against the wall so it won't slip
- Don't exercise if you're feeling unwell
- Have your resistance band ready check it for any damage

About resistance bands

These are fantastic for improving muscle strength and can be used by patients rehabilitating after surgery through to elite athletes.

The colour denotes the strength so as you get stronger you can use a more resistant band. The Move it or Lose it! bands are:

Yellow

VERY LIGHT

Red

LIGHT

Green

MEDIUM

Blue

STRONG

Black

EXTRA STRONG

It's best to use a lighter band and learn the techniques properly before moving onto a stronger band.

To keep your band in tip-top condition remember to roll it up after each use and keep it out of direct sunlight.

When it is new you may find it is lightly coated with powder which stops it from sticking together (this may come off on your clothes at first but easily washes off). Occasionally you can pop the band into a plastic bag with a very small amount of talcum powder to re-coat it.

Don't over-stretch your band and if there are any signs of damage such as tears, then it's time to replace it.



Wrist & ANKLE





Do these exercises sitting down.



Make a loose fist with your hands then circle your wrists gently around trying to increase the size of the circle gradually

Keep your elbows slightly bent and your shoulders relaxed

Do up to 10 in each direction

Keep one foot on the floor and circle the other foot around slowly

Do up to 10 in each direction then repeat with the other foot

Can you do both wrists and one ankle at the same time?



DID YOU KNOW?

When asked, centenarians claimed the secrets to healthy ageing are staying close to friends and family, maintaining a sense of independence and eating well.

TOP TIPS

Don't take both feet off the floor when you are sitting down as it may hurt your back.







Keeping your muscles strong is vital to combat the natural decline in muscle mass as we age, so try to do these strengthening exercises at least twice a week. You can choose one exercise for the legs plus one for the upper body on one day of the week, then next time choose a different set of exercises so you work on all the muscle groups over the week.

If you've never done this type of exercise before then start off gradually, aim to do about 5 repetitions and then build it up over several weeks. As you get stronger the exercises will feel easier, then it's time to do more repetitions.

Eventually you can work towards doing 10 repetitions, rest for a minute and then repeat. Once you can do three sets of 10 repetitions it's time to move onto a stronger band.



*TOP TIPS *

Don't wrap the band around your hands as it may hurt your joints.

This is great for keeping your leg muscles strong and, as they help to support the knee joint, this can help with walking too.



Sit in an upright chair with your feet on the floor, hip-width apart, tighten up your abdominal muscles and remember to breathe normally throughout

Loop the band down onto the floor and step on it with one foot, make sure the band is secure and won't slip off as you begin to exercise

Hold the band at each side of your knees as shown in the photograph

Now lift your foot up off the floor a little way and start to push against the band as you straighten your leg. Your heel should be close to the floor

At the same time pull your hands back towards your hips and bring your shoulders back

At first just hold for one second and return your foot to the floor and bring your hands back to the starting position

Try to do 5 on each leg, building up to 10

As you improve you can hold the outstretched position a little longer, up to 3 seconds



This works the muscles in your chest, shoulders and arms.



Sit back in your chair so your back is fully supported

Wrap the band around the back of the chair as shown

Hold the band and then turn your grip so that your palms are facing down, keep the wrists firm now

Gradually push the band forward, arms parallel to your legs. Make sure you're not straining or holding your breath

not straining or holding your breath

Hold for just a second then bend your

arms and return to the starting position

Make sure your movements are slow and smooth so the band doesn't snap back quickly

Repeat up to 5 times, gradually increasing to 10 as you improve

TOP TIPS

If you are ready to progress you can hold the outstretched position a little longer, up to a maximum of 3 seconds but remember not to hold your breath!



Approximately one third of centenarians and baby boomers claim to do resistance exercises every week.





BETTER BALANCE



Although it's really important to include exercises to improve your balance, you need to have sufficient strength first. If you cannot stand up safely without support (such as a walking aid or holding onto a chair) for 30 seconds then please don't try these balance exercises.

Continue with the programme and try again in a few weeks.

If you are concerned about your balance or have had a fall then ask your doctor about being referred to your local falls service, or accessing classes that specifically address balance such as Otago. This

will help with your confidence too.

Make sure you are safe when you do these balance exercises. Have a chair (or even two - one each side of you) at first or you may find the kitchen work surface is a better height for you to hold onto. Before

you begin each one remind
yourself of your good
standing posture position,
engage your abdominal
muscles and focus your
eyes on something straight
ahead to help you
concentrate.



Stand with your feet apart adopting the good posture position and hold onto your chair for support for 10 seconds.

Now try to let go of the chair and stand tall for 10 seconds.

If you can't manage 10 seconds unaided, then don't try the other balance exercises.

Semi Tandem FOOT STANCE

Place one of your feet halfway in front of the other, holding onto your chair for support for 10 seconds. Now try to let go of the chair and stand tall for up to 10 seconds.



Stand with one foot directly in front of the other holding onto your chair for support for 10 seconds.

Now try to let go of the chair and stand tall for up to 10 seconds.

Remember at any point you can hold the chair for support or move your feet.

*TOP TIPS *

The heel-to-toe stance is challenging and you may feel some natural sway as you stand. You may need to practice the parallel and semi-tandem stances until you feel able to try this and build up to the 10 seconds.

A donation from the sale of this book will be made to The Centre for Healthy Ageing Research at University of Birmingham to help older adults keep healthy and active. *Move it or Lose it!* is committed in it's support of the centre and helping future generations to age well.

This essential guide has 30 easy to follow exercises to help keep you moving and feel fit for life as you age. By doing the *Move it or Lose it!* programme for just 20 minutes a day, you can improve your strength, mobility and confidence, so you can keep doing the things you enjoy and live life to the full.





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www.moveitorloseit.co.uk