

MEDIA RELEASE

NEW EXERCISE CAMPAIGN TO ENCOURAGE ACTIVE LIVING AMONG SENIORS, INCLUDING THOSE WITH REDUCED MOBILITY

Exercise campaign features strength, balance and flexibility exercises that target the upper body to help seniors, including those with reduced mobility, stay active and healthy

Singapore, 26 March 2017 – To encourage seniors to stay active, the Health Promotion Board (HPB) launched its second exercise campaign, “You Can Get Moving”, to reach out to seniors aged 50 years and above, including those with reduced mobility, to do 7 Sit-Down Exercises that help to build strength, improve balance and flexibility*.

2. The campaign is the fifth in a series of campaigns under the National Seniors’ Health Programme, which seeks to encourage and empower seniors to take charge of their health so they can remain active and healthy in their golden years. The Programme is part of the Action Plan for Successful Ageing¹, a whole-of-nation blueprint comprising more than 70 initiatives in 12 key areas to help Singaporeans age well.

3. The 7 Sit-Down Exercises focus on maintaining and improving upper body strength in our arms, shoulders, chest and back. This is important for seniors as it helps them manage day-to-day tasks such as carrying groceries and doing household chores. Seniors with reduced mobility, particularly those who are wheelchair bound, can also benefit from the exercises as they tend to rely on their upper body strength to move around, push themselves up from their wheelchairs, and pull themselves closer to objects.

4. HPB recommends that seniors who are 50 years and above take part in strength and balance exercises at least twice a week, in addition to 150 minutes of moderate-intensity² physical activity each week. Seniors who participate in regular physical activity are also less susceptible to falls and have better cognitive functions including motor function, memory, reaction time, executive function and visual attention³. Research also suggests that exercises that target the upper body can help with function, mood and sleep for seniors who are less mobile⁴.

5. “We want all seniors to know that they can take small steps towards keeping active and healthy. Exercises for upper body strength among seniors tend to be overlooked. Through this campaign, we hope to remind them that upper body exercises such as the 7 Sit-Down Exercises are important to help them build strength. We want to let all seniors, including those

* HPB recommends that seniors aged 50 years and above take part in strength and balance exercises at least twice a week, in addition to 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each week. During moderate-intensity physical activity, you should be able to talk but not sing. This is a simple measure of your exercise intensity.

¹ www.successful-ageing.sg

² During moderate-intensity physical activity, you should be able to talk but not sing. This is a simple measure of your exercise intensity.

³ Health Promotion Board. National Physical Activity Guidelines: Professional Guide [Internet]. Singapore; 2011

⁴ Chen K-M, Li C-H, Huang H-T, Cheng Y-Y. Feasible modalities and long-term effects of elastic band exercises in nursing home older adults in wheelchairs: A cluster randomized controlled trial. Int J Nurs Stud [Internet]. 2016 Mar 1;55:4–14. Available from: <http://www.journalofnursingstudies.com/article/S002074891500365X/fulltext>

with limited mobility, know that exercise is relevant and important to them, and they can also reap the benefits of an active lifestyle,” said Dr Amy Khor, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Health and Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources.

6. Developed by HPB’s exercise specialists and supported by physiotherapists from NTUC Health and Sport Singapore (SportSG), the 7 Sit-Down Exercises can be done in the comfort of a senior’s home. Seniors will only need a sturdy chair and a towel to carry out the exercises. However, those who are unsure or with medical conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, joint or muscle conditions should consult their doctor before doing the exercises.

Exercise video and poster for seniors to do exercises at own pace and time

7. HPB has also developed an exercise video to demonstrate how each of the 7 Sit-Down Exercises should be done so that seniors and their family members can watch and participate in the exercises together. The exercise video, available in English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil can be viewed or downloaded from www.HealthyAgeing.sg/GetMoving from 26 March 2017.

8. The video will also be supplemented by an exercise poster with easy-to-understand instructions, pictures and safety tips for seniors to exercise safely and effectively (see **Annex A**). These educational materials will make it easy for them to learn and adopt the 7 Sit-Down Exercises at their own pace and time. The exercise poster will be distributed through HPB’s partners, such as community clubs/centres, Guardian, Unity and Watsons retail pharmacies, polyclinics and healthcare institutions, from May 2017. Members of the public can visit www.HealthyAgeing.sg/GetMoving from May 2017 for updates on the distribution of the exercise poster.

9. The “You Can Get Moving” campaign complements HPB’s “7 Easy Exercises to an Active Lifestyle” exercise video launched in September 2015, which focuses on exercises to increase strength, balance and flexibility.

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About Health Promotion Board

The Health Promotion Board was established as a statutory board under the Ministry of Health, Singapore, in 2001 with the vision of building “A Nation of Healthy People”. The Health Promotion Board aims to empower the people of Singapore to attain optimal health, increase the quality and years of healthy life and prevent illness, disability and premature death. As the key agency overseeing national health promotion and disease prevention programmes, HPB spearheads health education, promotion and prevention programmes as well as creates a health-supportive environment in Singapore. It develops and organises relevant health promotion and disease prevention programmes, reaching out to the healthy, the at-risk and the unhealthy at all stages of life – children, youths, adults and older Singapore residents. Its health promotion programmes include nutrition, mental health, physical activity, smoking control and communicable disease education. HPB also promotes healthy ageing, integrated health screening, and chronic disease education and management.

More information can be found at www.hpb.gov.sg.

About the National Seniors' Health Programme

The National Seniors' Health Programme aims to encourage and empower seniors to take charge of their health so they can maintain their physical well-being, mental well-being and functional health. The inaugural campaign was launched in September 2015 with an exercise video for seniors titled "7 Easy Exercises to an Active Lifestyle". In 2016, HPB rolled out a nutrition campaign to help seniors understand the importance of a healthy diet, a Falls Prevention Awareness Campaign that educated seniors and their caregivers on the five tips to reduce the risk of falls as well as a Stroke Awareness Campaign to deepen public understanding of the signs of stroke and advocate timely action when stroke occurs.

YOU CAN AGE WELL



YOU CAN GET MOVING

DO THE 7 SIT-DOWN EXERCISES

Anyone can get moving with these 7 sit-down exercises. You will become stronger, balance better, and move with greater flexibility. Do these at least twice a week.

How to exercise safely:

- Do not exercise if you are not feeling well.
- Stop if you feel dizzy, unwell or experience any pain or discomfort at any time during the exercise.
- If you have any medical condition(s), consult your doctor before doing these exercises.
- Sit on a sturdy chair with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Sit upright and breathe normally during the exercise.
- Do not lean against the backrest.
- Do the exercises slowly.

How to identify a sturdy chair:

- It has a backrest.
- It should not swivel, have rollers, or be able to turn.
- It should not be a foldable chair.
- It should not be made of a light-weight material, such as plastic, as that may cause the chair to fall back easily.

How to hold a towel correctly:

- Use a towel that is at least one arm's length.
- The towel should be pulled tight and held firmly in your hands throughout the exercises.

1. WARM-UP EXERCISE

Clap Hands

Continue for 3 min



2. STRENGTH EXERCISES

Boxer

Do 10 times



Pull Down

Do 10 times



Touch the Sky

Do 10 times on each side



3. BALANCE EXERCISE

Aeroplane

Do 10 times



For more benefits, repeat the Strength and Balance Exercises at least once.

4. FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES

Open Arms

Hold for 20 sec



Give Flowers

Hold for 20 sec



Find out more at www.HealthyAgeing.sg/GetMoving

An initiative under the Action Plan for Successful Ageing