Orientation to Otago Exercises

The following chart is meant to help guide you through your client’s exercises. Please refer to it whenever you have questions or concerns about an exercise, or simply need a refresher.

Things to consider:

* The provided cues are only *suggestions* of ways to help your client perform the proper movement. Be creative!
* Consider *showing* the exercise by first doing it yourself.
* You could also be more *hands on*, guiding the client through the movement to help them learn the exercises.
* Look for ways to *motivate* your client to participate—What are their likes? Dislikes? Again, be creative!

Warm Up

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| **Exercise** | **Directions** | **Things to watch for** | **Cueing the client** |
| Head Movements | * Stand up tall and look ahead. * Slowly turn head side to side looking over each shoulder) * Repeat 5x on each side. | * Head/neck should be held up high. * No slouching. | * “Look over your shoulder!” * “Turn your head until you feel a comfortable stretch.” |
| Neck Movements | * Stand up tall and look ahead. * Place hand on chin and pull straight back. * Repeat 5x. | * Head/neck should be held up high. * No slouching. * Head should move straight backwards. | * “Pull your head straight back.” * “Pretend someone’s going to kiss you and you need to get away.” |
| Back Extension | * Stand up tall with hands on the small of the back. * Gently arch the back. * Repeat 5x. | * Stand up as tall as possible with feet far apart to ensure safety. * Arching should be GENTLE and not painful. | * “Arch your back like a cat.” * “Stick your chest forward.” |
| Trunk Movements | * Stand up tall with hands on the hips. * Rotate trunk to the left and then rotate trunk to the right. * Repeat 5x to each side. | * Hips and legs should remain still. * Only rotate the torso. | * “Pretend like you’re trying to see something behind you.” * “Turn your torso until you feel a nice stretch.” |
| Ankle Movements | * Sit up straight in chair (chair should be pushed up against a wall). * Pull the foot up then point it down. * Repeat 10x with each foot. | * Only the ankle should be moving. | * “Tap your foot.” * “Now point your toe, like a ballerina.” |

Strengthening

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| **Exercise** | **Directions** | **Things to watch for** | **Cueing the client** |
| Front Knee | * Strap weight to ankle. * Sit up straight in chair (chair should be pushed up against a wall). * Straighten leg. * Lower leg. * Do on both sides. * Repeat 10x each side. | * No slouching. * Only the knee should straighten. * SLOWLY bend the knee. | * “Kick your leg out.” * “Pretend you’re going to kick a ball.” * “Bring your knee back, slow like molasses.” |
| Back Knee | * Stand up tall with hands on a table/walker. * Strap weight to ankle. * Bend the knee up. * Lower the leg. * Do on both sides. * Repeat 10x each side. | * No slouching. * Knee crease should make a right angle every time. | * “Try to kick your butt with your foot.” |
| Side Hip | * Stand up tall holding on to table/walker. * Strap weight to ankle. * Keep leg straight and kick it out to the side. * Do both sides. * Repeat 10x each side. | * No leaning over (to right or left—stand up tall the whole time). * Toes must point forward. * Make sure leg is only moving sideways (not to the front/back of client). | * “Kick your leg out to the side.” * “Stay up tall; don’t look like the Leaning Tower of Pisa!” |
| Calf Raises | * Stand up tall holding on to table/walker. * Place feet shoulder-width apart. * Come up onto tip toes. * Lower heels back to ground. * Repeat 10x | * Clear heels from the floor as much as possible (so, high onto tippy toes). | * “Go on to your tippy toes.” * “How tall can you get?” * “Can you be taller than me?” |
| Toe Raises | * Stand up tall holding on to table/walker. * Place feet shoulder-width apart. * Move back to the heels raising toes off the ground. * Repeat 10x each side. | * Front aspect of the foot should LIFT off the floor. * Should be raising more than just the toes. * Don’t just lean back towards heels. | * “Tap your toes/foot on the ground.” |

Balance

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| **Exercise** | **Directions** | **Things to watch for** | **Cueing the client** |
| Knee Bends | * Stand up tall holding on to table/walker. * Place feet shoulder-width apart. * Squat halfway down. | * Knees should be bending, moving over the toes. * Don’t just stick out the buttocks. * Bend knees until heel comes off the floor. | * “Don’t stick out your butt!” |
| Backwards walking | * Stand up tall and hold onto table or railing. * Take 10 steps backwards. * Turn around and go the other way. | * Don’t constantly look over the shoulder to see where you’re going. * Should take average-size steps. | * “Let the wall guide you.” * “Move at a comfortable pace.” |
| Walking and turning | * Stand up tall. * Walk in a figure eight. | * Should take average-size steps. * Don’t keep rotating the head. | * Use tape to make a figure 8 on the ground somewhere in the building. * Walk in two big circles. |
| Sideways walking | * Stand up tall, place hands on hip. * Take 10 steps to the right. * Take 10 steps to the left. | * Toes should point forward the whole time. * Remain facing in the same direction the whole time. | * “Walk to the side.” * Give client a target to walk towards. * “Point toes towards wall.” |
| Heel-Toe standing | * Stand up tall, hold on to the table. * Arrange the feet one in front of the other with the heel of one foot touching the toes of the other. * Hold for 10 seconds. * Switch foot position and repeat. | * Keep the legs straight. * Toes should be pointing forward. * Toes and heels should touch. | * “Pretend you’re standing on a balance beam/tight rope.” * “Hold still!” |
| Heel-toe walking | * Stand up tall holding on to table. * Place heel of one foot in front the toes of the other. * Toes of one foot should meet the heel of the other. * Take 10 steps. * Turn around, repeat. | * Look directly ahead. * Feet should remain close together. | * Pretend you’re walking on a balance beam/tight rope.” |
| One-Leg standing | * Stand up tall holding on to table/walker. * Stand on one leg. * Hold 10 seconds. * Repeat on the other side. | * Foot should be completely off the floor. * Keep eyes open. | * “Look at the wall in front of you,” (or pick another target). |
| Heel walking | * Stand up next to table. * Shift weight back to heels lifting toes off the floor. * Take 10 steps forward on the heels. | * Should look directly ahead. * Keep toes off of the floor | * “Pick up your toes.” |
| Toe walking | * Stand up tall next to a table. * Rise onto tip toes. * Take 10 steps forward on toes. | * Look directly ahead. * Keep heels off of the floor. | * “Walk on your toes.” * “Shhh...pretend you have to tip toe!” |
| Heel-Toe walking backward | * Stand up tall near a table/wall. * Place one foot directly behind the other. * Toes of one foot should meet the heel of the other. * Take 10 steps. | * Use wall to guide backwards. * Look directly ahead. * Toes and heels should touch. | * “Pretend you’re walking on a balance beam—backwards!” |
| Sit to stand | * Sit in a chair (chair should be pushed up against a wall and shouldn’t be too low). * Push up into a standing position. | * Feet should be behind the knees. * Lean head/trunk forward to push up from the chair. | * “Bring your nose over your toes.” |
| Stair walking | * Hold on to hand rail. * Go up and down the stairs. | * Only one foot on a stair at a time (i.e. not both feet on the same step) | * “Let’s head up the stairs!” |

All images are provided courtesy of the Otago Exercise Program Activity Booklet © *Tools to implement the Otago exercise program: A program to reduce falls. In: First ed. Center for Disease Control and Prevention.*