# Qigong for seniors

**a seated routine you can do in a chair**

Seated qigong for seniors takes about 10 minutes: eight slow moves in a chair, with no equipment. Each step gives the position, movement, breath and repeats, and the whole routine prints as a PDF.

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The person in these photos does not exist. The images were made with AI. Why?

**Before you start.** Move slowly and only as far as feels comfortable. Stop if you feel pain, dizziness or shortness of breath. If you have a medical condition, have had surgery, are pregnant or are unsure, ask your doctor first. This page does not replace medical advice or instruction from a qualified teacher.

## What are some good qigong exercises for seniors?

The VA notes that qigong can be done seated or standing. This routine stays in the chair from start to finish, so you can try it before you decide about standing work. It is an adaptation: we put it together from published seated moves, and it has no traditional lineage.



### 1 Sit tall and breathe

Sit on the front third of a sturdy chair with your feet flat and hip-width apart. Rest your hands on your thighs and let your shoulders drop as you breathe out. Stay here for 5 breaths.



### 2 Roll the shoulders

Let your arms hang loose and breathe evenly. Lift your shoulders and roll them forward 5 times. Then roll them back 5 times.



### 3 Turn the head

With your hands on your thighs, look slowly over your right shoulder, back to center, then over your left. Breathe out as you turn and in as you return. Do 4 turns each way, and keep your head from tipping back.



### 4 Raise and lower the arms

Start with your hands in your lap. Breathe in as your arms float forward to shoulder height, and breathe out as they sink. Do this 8 times.



### 5 Open and close

Hold your hands in front of your chest, palms facing. Breathe in as they drift apart to shoulder width, and breathe out as they come back, shoulders low. Do this 6 times.



### 6 Turn the ball

Hold an imaginary ball at your belly, right hand on top and left underneath. Turn from the waist to the right, only until the ball is above your right knee, then swap hands and turn left. Do 4 turns each way, breathing calmly.



### 7 Rock the feet

Rest your hands on your legs with both feet flat. Breathe in as you rock forward onto your toes, and breathe out as you rock back onto your heels. Do this 8 times.



### 8 Close in stillness

Rest one palm over the other below your navel. Take 5 slow breaths into your belly. Stay seated a moment before you get up.

## What are the standing options?

If you feel steady on your feet, stand behind the chair and keep one hand on its back. From there you can roll your shoulders, turn your head and slowly shift your weight from leg to leg. When that feels familiar, the beginner routine moves you away from the chair, and the Eight Brocades are a good next form.

## How do you practice safely?

- **Chair:** Choose a solid, stable chair. Skip anything with wheels. If you use a wheelchair, lock the brakes. If sitting forward feels unsteady, sit back in the chair.
- **Shoes:** Wear flat, well-fitting shoes and loose clothing.
- **Space:** Use a flat, non-slip floor with enough room to stretch your arms out fully.
- **Effort:** Stay within your comfort zone and rest when you feel tired.
- **Stopping:** Chest pain, shortness of breath, lightheadedness or joint pain are signs to stop and call your doctor.
- **Doctor:** If you are concerned about starting, ask your doctor which activities to avoid.
- **Bones:** In people with osteoporosis, bending forward and twisting at the waist can raise the risk of broken bones in the spine, Mayo Clinic says. Skip step 6 and ask your doctor first.

# How often should seniors practice?

NCCIH lists no general schedule for qigong. MedlinePlus says that if you have not been active, you can start slowly and work up. You can split this routine in two: the first four steps today, the last four tomorrow.

# Does chair qigong actually work?

This page covers how to do the moves. For what studies report and how strong that evidence is, read qigong benefits. For who should take care, read is qigong safe?

# Are there videos and classes for seniors?

To follow along, try the 15 minute Seated Qigong Routine from Qigong with Kseny, or Seated Qigong: Gentle Chair Exercises from TheNQAChannel, about 45 minutes. More channels are in the qigong YouTube channels compared.

The VA notes that a trained instructor can guide moves done standing, seated, or with a walker or wheelchair. See how to find a qigong class.

# What next?

- **Follow along:** 15 minute Seated Qigong Routine from Qigong with Kseny.
- **Standing next:** the beginner routine, with a hand on a chair back or wall if you need it.
- **What studies report:** qigong benefits.