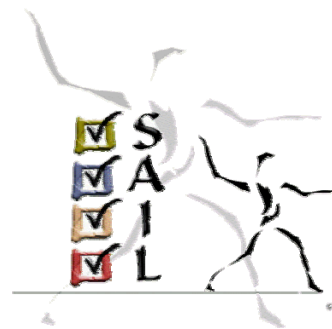


# SAIL HOME ACTIVITY PROGRAM

## INFORMATION FOR CLIENTS AND THEIR FAMILY



### WHAT is it?

The SAIL Home Activity Program is a set of 7 activities developed for adults receiving home support services. The initial idea came from a program developed by the Canadian Center for Activity and Aging. Their Home Support Exercise Program is in use in many parts of Ontario and Alberta. The activities in the SAIL Home Activity Program have been carefully selected by experienced community rehab physiotherapists and occupational therapists throughout the province of BC.

### WHY was it developed?

1. **People receiving home support services are at risk for increasing weakness and loss of function.** Muscle weakness and poor balance are major risk factors for falling. The SAIL home activity program will help you improve your muscle strength and balance and endurance and reduce your risk of falling. Often people who are the weakest can have the biggest percentage gains in strength. You are never too old. Some studies of people in their 80s and 90s have shown a dramatic increase in muscle strength with regular strengthening activities.
2. **Physical activity and exercise are key to maintaining or improving health:** Physical inactivity significantly increases the risk of getting many chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, dementia and cancer. You may already have a chronic disease. People who already have chronic diseases can show considerable improvement in their overall health with increased physical activity.
  - **Diabetes:** Various studies have shown that changes in diet and increasing physical activity can decrease the risk of getting diabetes by up to 40 to 70%. People who already have diabetes who increase their physical activity usually have better blood sugar levels and less complications such as wounds that don't heal well.
  - **Heart disease and hypertension:** Regular physical activity can improve the elasticity of the walls of the arteries in the body by about 35%.
  - Physical activity increases the ability of the heart muscle to pump more effectively and efficiently.
  - **Osteoporosis:** Physical activity (weight bearing, resistance exercises, and exercises which put unusual stresses on the bones) improves bone health and bone strength
  - **Dementia:** Regular physical activity decreases the risk of getting a dementia like Alzheimers Disease by up to 20 to 30%. A study in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 2004 found women who walked 1 ½ hr per week did better on mental function tests than less active women. What is good for the heart is also good for the brain.

- Exercise programs for people with Alzheimers disease have been shown to improve formal test scores, improve sleep, decrease agitation, decrease aggression and decrease falls.
- **Cancer:** Overall up to 30 to 35% of all cancers can be prevented by eating well, being active, staying at a healthy weight and not smoking. Regular physical activity results in up to a 50% decrease in the risk of breast, colon and prostate cancer

**“The greatest health risk for older adults is sedentary living.”** World Health Organization 1997

3. **It is simple and adaptable** for your individual needs and abilities, and has built in progression. It does not require an individualized assessment by a physiotherapist or occupational therapist. If you want, you can start by doing just one of the activities each day. Additional exercises can be added as you feel able, until hopefully you will soon be able to do all seven activities. As the TV commercial says “JUST DO IT!!”

## HOW does it happen?

Your long term care case manager will usually be the one to recommend the program to you, and ask if you are willing to try it.

He or she will then ask the community health workers who come regularly to help you, to teach you the activities that are a part of the SAIL Home Activity Program. You will be given a written copy of the seven activities with pictures and directions.

The community health workers will provide ongoing support and encouragement and reminders, because let’s face it, we all often find it hard to increase our physical activity.

Each activity has clear directions about when and how to make the activity more difficult as you get stronger.

## Keeping Track:

It is very helpful to write down how many of each activity you do each day so that there is a record of your progress. You can see how much you have accomplished when it is written down. The SAIL Home Activity Program Tracking Record is provided for this purpose.

## Client Stories:

“I look forward to my “exercise girl” coming each day. I can do more for myself now, and she gives me lots of encouragement.”

“I didn’t realize how much weaker one of my legs was until I tried doing the exercises. Now I am working hard to get that leg stronger.”

“I have been doing the exercises for 8 weeks, and now I am not as depressed, my knees don’t hurt so much, my blood sugars are better, and I have lost 6 pounds without even trying.”