



EMBRACE THE FLOOR: How to Safely Get Seated, Sit, and Rise with Ease



GUEST CORNER

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The summer season invites us to fun in the sun, whether you're lying on the beach, picnicking on the grass, or getting your hands dirty in the garden. It all sounds relaxing until we realize that getting down and up off the ground becomes an increasing challenge as we get older. While little kids fall and get right back up with ease, over time as we mature and age, we lose strength and mobility in large muscle groups (such as the legs and thighs), which makes the seemingly simple activity of sitting on the floor and getting back up a struggle. Luckily, with some guidance and understanding, adults can regain their floor-friendly confidence.

THE ART OF STANDING UP FROM A SEATED POSITIONS

Let's take a look into the art of standing up from a seated position on the floor to ensure a smooth, safe, and stable transition.

Step 1: Getting seated

- Check your surroundings – to prevent any trips or falls, ensure that the area is clear of any obstacles like dogs or children
- Identify a flat surface – to minimize any wobbling or imbalance during your descent, find the most level surface before taking a seat
- Lower yourself down – squat with legs wide apart or bend at the knees with your hands resting right above your knees for assistance, engage your core and buttocks to help maintain a straight neutral spine to protect your back while squatting down. You can also ask a friend for assistance by stabilizing yourself with the helping hand (or forearm) of your friend
- Take your seat – once you have squatted close enough to the ground, place your hands on the floor in front of you and lower your buttocks onto the ground

Step 2: Sitting comfortably

Once you've successfully reached the floor, it's essential to keep proper posture in mind to prevent straining your back and causing discomfort.

- Sitting with your legs crossed – if you are flexible enough to do so -- sit cross-legged with a straight back. You

can check and correct your posture by imagining a string pulling you from the top of your head while seated.

- If you are uncomfortable sitting cross-legged – place a bolster or rolled-up towel underneath your tailbone to elevate your buttocks slightly above your legs. You can then cross and bend your legs to your comfort level.

- For further back support (if possible), sit with your back against a "wall" such as a tree or even a cooler. You can also place a cushion or rolled-up towel behind your lower back to help maintain the natural curvature of your spine and reduce muscle sprains.

- Prevent stiffness – keep your blood circulation healthy by regularly changing your seated position, if you are sitting cross legged you can stretch your legs by extending them in front of you and placing your palms on the floor behind you for support

- Prevent discomfort – avoid sitting with your legs beneath you as it can lead to cramps and numbness, and try to avoid sitting for too long with your legs folded to your sides as it can lead to misalignment in your back

Step 3: Standing back up

- Check your surroundings – similar to sitting down, make sure there are no obstacles that could get in the way of your upward movement.
- If comfortably sitting crossed legged – position your feet in front of you on the ground shoulder-width apart while keeping your knees bent. Next slowly shift your weight onto one knee by engaging your glutes, core, and thighs and coming into a half kneeling position, for stability place your hands on your thighs/above your knees and push yourself up to a balanced upright position
- For a more stable option – position yourself on your hands and knees while keeping your knees and feet comfortably apart, then walk your hands towards your feet while keeping your knees bent and raising your seat until you are able to slowly place your hands on your thighs/above your knees and push yourself up to a balanced upright position.

STAY ACTIVE TO SIT AND STAND UP WITHOUT COMPLICATIONS

Additional tips to enjoy an active summer and life:

- Walk on a regular basis – take advantage of the warm weather and go for regular walks outside to help build endurance and strength in your legs.
- Incorporate dynamic exercises –



exercises like squats and lunges, or even just practicing sitting and standing from a chair without the use of your hands are essential in maintaining mobility in daily life.

When practiced safely, getting seated, sitting, and standing back up off the ground can help ensure pain free summer activities. As we age, it becomes increasingly necessary to our health to under-

stand the importance of the day to day mobility that we often took for granted as children. Remember to always listen to your body, pace yourself, and adapt these steps to suit your individual needs.

If you experience any unusual pain or discomfort when sitting or standing, or need more personal guidance, please contact your physician or physical therapist.

Lize Lubbe is the owner of Lize Lubbe Physical Therapy with its main practice located at 892 Route 35 in Cross River and a PT Studio in the premises of Apex Fitness (where her team focus on the rehabilitation of sports-related injuries). Learn more by calling 914-875-9430, emailing contact@lizelubbept.com or visiting www.lizelubbept.com.



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