

SEATED STRENGTH & MOBILITY FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

MOBILATES MOVEMENT GUIDE

written by Suzanne Warren, Mobilates teacher



mobilates®

STRONGER THAN
YESTERDAY

WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR

This guide is designed for people who would benefit from gentle, supported movement in a seated position.

It may be helpful if you:

- Spend a lot of time sitting due to fatigue, pain, mobility changes, or health conditions
- Are beginning to feel more confident with movement after starting in bed or lying positions
- Want to improve strength and mobility for everyday activities such as standing, reaching, turning, or walking
- Feel unsteady, less confident standing, or are worried about falls
- Prefer supported exercise that can be adapted to how you feel on the day

The exercises in this guide focus on posture, breathing, spinal mobility, gentle strength, coordination, and functional everyday movement.

All movements can be adapted and performed at your own pace.



THE NATIONAL
LOTTERY®



SPORT
ENGLAND

www.mobilates.com





SEATED STRENGTH & MOBILITY FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

MOBILATES MOVEMENT GUIDE



INTRODUCTION

Mobilates is a gentle, adaptable approach to movement designed to support people of all ages and abilities. It combines Pilates-inspired exercise, functional movement, and mindful pacing to help you move in a way that feels safe, achievable, and sustainable.

These guides are designed for people who may be living with long-term health conditions, pain, fatigue, or reduced mobility. You do not need previous experience to begin, and every exercise can be adapted to suit your body and how you feel on the day.

We understand that movement can sometimes feel uncertain when you're experiencing pain or managing a health condition. That's why Mobilates focuses on choice, control, and gradual progress rather than pushing through discomfort.

You are encouraged to work at your own pace, take breaks when needed, and choose the version of each exercise that feels right for you.

In this guide, we focus on seated movement to help build strength, mobility, and confidence for everyday activities such as standing, reaching, and moving more freely throughout the day.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

- Start with the simplest version of each exercise
- All movements can be done while seated and fully supported if needed
- Move slowly and gently, within a comfortable range
- Take breaks whenever needed
- You do not need previous experience with exercise or Pilates
- Small, gentle movements are still valuable

A guided video session is available via the QR code at the end of this guide to help you follow along at your own pace.

PREPARING FOR STANDING MOVEMENT

Before you begin, you may wish to set yourself up in a way that feels safe and supportive:

- Sit on a stable, firm chair where you feel secure
 - Ideally choose a chair without wheels and without armrests, so you can move freely and safely
 - The chair needs to have a flat bottom
 - Keep your feet flat on the floor or supported comfortably
 - Sit tall but relaxed, using cushions or support behind your back if needed
 - Make sure you feel balanced and settled before starting
 - Keep a drink of water nearby if helpful
 - Wear comfortable clothing that allows free movement.
- You can also adjust your position or take breaks at any point during the session. There is no need to stay still if you need to reset or get comfortable again.

CORE MOVEMENT EXERCISES



1



Alignment, Breathing & Centring

What it helps with: Helps you settle into a comfortable seated position, calm the nervous system, and prepare for movement.

How to do it:

- Sit on a stable, supportive chair with your feet grounded
- Allow your spine to feel tall but relaxed
- Rest your hands on your thighs or lap
- Notice your natural breath
- Inhale gently through the nose
- Exhale slowly through the mouth
- Repeat for several breaths

Make it easier: Sit back into the chair for full support and keep breathing natural.

2



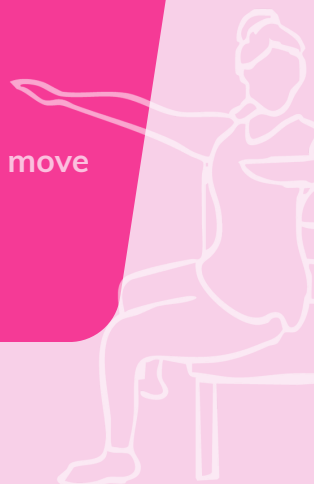
Shoulder Rolls

What it helps with: Releases tension in the upper back, neck, and shoulders.

How to do it:

- Lift your shoulders gently towards your ears
- Roll them slowly backwards and down
- Let them soften away from the ears
- Repeat slowly and smoothly

Make it easier: Use very small movements or move one shoulder at a time.



3



Seated Spinal Flexion & Extension

What it helps with: Improves mobility through the spine and reduces stiffness from sitting.

How to do it:

- Sit tall with feet grounded
- Gently round your spine forward into a small curl
- Pause briefly
- Return slowly to sitting tall
- Repeat in a controlled rhythm

Make it easier: Make the movement very small and keep hands on thighs for support.

4



Seated Rotation

What it helps with: Improves spinal rotation and upper body mobility.

How to do it:

- Sit tall with hips facing forward
- Gently turn your upper body to one side
- Return to centre
- Repeat on the other side
- Move slowly and with control

Make it easier: Reduce range and keep hands resting on thighs.

5



Seated Thread the Needle

What it helps with: Encourages gentle rotation through the upper back and shoulders while improving mobility and posture.

How to do it:

- Sit comfortably towards the front of the chair with feet grounded
- Inhale to prepare
- Exhale as you gently reach one arm across the body and through the space between the opposite arm and body
 - Allow the upper back and shoulders to gently rotate
- Inhale to return to centre
- Repeat on the other side
- Move slowly and comfortably without forcing the movement

Make it easier: Keep the movement small or rest the supporting hand on the thigh for extra balance.

6



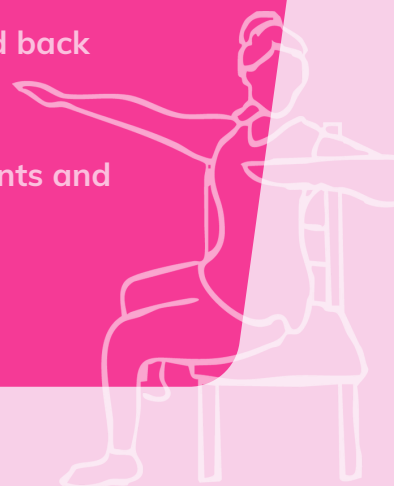
Seated Weight Shift

What it helps with: Improves balance awareness and prepares for standing movement.

How to do it:

- Shift your weight gently to one side
- Return to centre
- Shift to the other side
- Then gently shift slightly forward and back
- Keep both feet grounded

Make it easier: Use very small movements and pause between shifts.



7



Seated Marching

What it helps with: Builds gentle strength and supports preparation for walking and standing.

How to do it:

- Lift one foot slightly off the floor
- Place it back down with control
- Repeat on the other side
- Continue in a slow, steady rhythm

Make it easier: Keep lifts very small, lift just the heels or pause between movements.

8



Seated Lateral Flexion

What it helps with: Stretches the side body and improves rib mobility.

How to do it:

- Sit tall with feet grounded
- Gently slide one hand down towards your thigh
- Allow the opposite arm to reach slightly overhead
- Return to centre
- Repeat on the other side

Make it easier: Keep both hands low and only lean slightly.



9



Seated Breathing & Close

What it helps with: Calms the body and supports a settled finish to the session.

How to do it:

- Rest your hands on your lap or thighs
- Allow your body to soften into the chair
- Breathe slowly in through the nose
- Exhale gently through the mouth
- Notice how your body feels compared to the start

Make it easier: Simply sit quietly and observe natural breathing.



SAFETY & MOVEMENT GUIDELINES

- Move only within a comfortable and controlled range
- Stop if pain increases, becomes sharp, or feels unsafe
- It is normal to have both higher and lower energy days
- Gentle movement is still beneficial, even in small amounts
- If you are unsure about exercise suitability, seek advice from a healthcare professional

TAKING CARE WITH POSITION CHANGES

Some people may feel dizzy, light-headed, unsteady, or uncomfortable when changing position, particularly when moving from sitting to standing.

If this applies to you:

- Move slowly and take pauses between changes in position
- Ensure you are seated on a stable, supportive chair before starting and before standing
- Keep both feet grounded when preparing to move
- Stand up gradually, allowing time to adjust once upright
- Keep water nearby if helpful
- Use support from furniture or another person if needed
- Stop and rest if symptoms increase

It is completely okay to remain seated for longer, or to pause the session at any point, if this feels safer or more comfortable for your body.

SUPPORT FOR LONG-TERM CONDITIONS

If you are living with a long-term health condition such as Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS), Osteoarthritis, fibromyalgia, chronic pain, fatigue conditions, or long-term reduced mobility, you may find our additional resources helpful.

- Exercise with Chronic Health Conditions Series:
<https://www.mobilates.com/blog/categories/specific-conditions>
- Spotlight on Classes Series:
<https://www.mobilates.com/blog/categories/spotlight-on-classes>
- Bed, Standing Confidence, and Managing Pain and Long Term Health Conditions Mobilates guides (full progression series)

These resources explore how movement can be adapted safely and sustainably for different health needs.

TRY A GUIDED SESSION

Scan the QR code to access a gentle Seated Mobilates session you can follow at home. This session mirrors the movements in this guide and allows you to move at a slow, supportive pace with guidance throughout.

