

EXERCISE FOR MATURE DRIVERS

The Hartford Center for Mature Market Excellence® and the MIT AgeLab conducted research to better understand how exercise can enhance certain aspects of flexibility and range of motion for mature drivers age 50+. Our research included a study in which drivers were asked to perform an exercise program daily for eight to 10 weeks. The exercise program focused on four areas: Strength, Flexibility, Range of Motion and Coordination. Our findings showed that these exercises enhanced specific driving tasks. Here are a few examples of the types of exercises our research participants did as part of the study.



STRENGTH EXERCISES

Biceps Curls (with elastic tubing with handles): Biceps curls are a good strength exercise for the upper body. Using tubing with handles provides for effective strength training. Elastic tubing is color coded for resistance and can be purchased at any sporting goods store. Choose the color that best matches your skill and comfort levels. Biceps curls can be performed from either a standing or a seated position. Recommended: 2 or 3 sets of 8 repetitions per set. The following options are for your safety and comfort:

- **From a standing position:** Stand with the tubing placed under one OR both feet to adjust the tube to the length and resistance tension most comfortable for you. Begin with your elbows straight, palms facing forward and elbows tucked in at your waist. Exhale as you bend your elbows and raise your hands up close to your shoulders.
- **From a seated position:** Place the elastic tubing under your feet with your toes down to prevent the tubing from rolling off your toes. Place your feet on the floor in a narrow OR wide stance to adjust the tube to the length and resistance tension most comfortable for you. Begin with your elbows straight, palms facing forward and elbows tucked in at your waist. Exhale as you bend your elbows and raise your hands up close to your shoulders.



Squats: Squats are an excellent exercise to increase lower body strength. Stand tall with your feet hip distance apart and your toes pointing forward. Bend your hips and knees and push your hips back as if sitting in the air. Raise both arms forward to counter balance your hips moving back. Inhale on the downward phase of the squat, exhale as you return to the standing position. Options: From a standing position, use a chair for support placed to the side and/or behind you and perform “chair squats.” Recommended: 2 or 3 sets of 8 repetitions per set.

RANGE OF MOTION EXERCISES

Back Stretch: From a seated position, cross your right leg over your left leg either at the knee or the ankle. With your chest up and shoulders down, contract your abdominals and slowly rotate your upper body to the right. Keeping both hips in contact with the chair, hold at the point of tension for 3 to 5 seconds. Return to the start position and repeat one more time before changing to the other side. If you have discomfort at the hip or knee, cross at the ankle instead.



Heel Drops: Heel drops are an exercise to maximize ankle strength and flexibility. From a seated position, slowly alternate pointing and flexing your toes and ankles. Hold each point and flexed position for 3 to 5 seconds. Think of the driving action required for your feet to point and flex at the ankle as they press on the brake and accelerator pedals. Recommended: 8 to 12 heel drop repetitions.

FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES

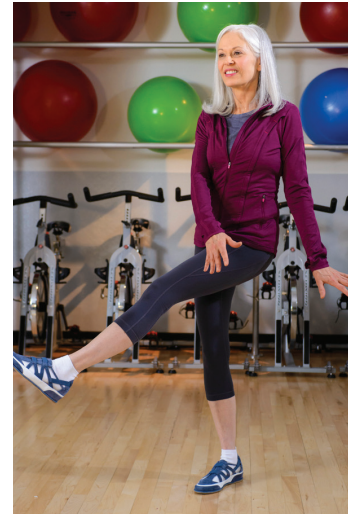
Chest & Shoulder Expansion: Upper body flexibility is important for all driving activities. Chest and shoulder expansion exercises increase the flexibility of your chest and shoulders in the front of the body. From a seated position, sit forward in your chair and place your hands low on the back frame of the chair. Lean forward at your hips until your elbows are straight. Inhale while lifting your chest, exhale as you lean forward at your hips and stretch your shoulders. Repeat 4 times.



Shoulder Stretch: The shoulder stretch increases flexibility in your back and shoulders. From a seated or standing position, maintain good posture with your chest lifted, shoulders down and abdominals tight. Cross your right arm over your chest (below shoulder height) and hold in place with your left hand above the elbow for a shoulder and back stretch. Hold the stretch for 5 to 10 seconds and repeat on the other side. Repeat 1 to 2 times.

COORDINATION EXERCISES

Soccer Kicks: Soccer kicks are energetic activity to improve reaction time, agility, balance and coordination. On a flat surface area, warm up with low kicks, alternating right and left kicks. Stand tall with good posture – chest up, shoulders down. Kick across your body with a slight bend in your knees. Let both arms move in the opposite direction your leg is kicking. Recommended: 4 sets of 8 repetitions per set.



Lateral Steps: Lateral steps are the perfect follow-up to soccer kicks for improving endurance, agility, balance and coordination. On a flat surface area, start with your feet together and step sideways right and left – with your feet moving as wide as you are comfortable. Keep a slight bend in your knees as you step to the right and left. Place your hands on your hips or move your arms up and down at the shoulder. Breathe evenly and continuously. Option: Step farther to each side for more agility work and inner and outer thigh strengthening, and open your arms wider to the side or overhead with each lateral step. Recommended: 4 sets of 8 repetitions per set.

For more information on **Exercise for Mature Drivers**, practical tools, free guidebooks and an informational video visit: thehartford.com/lifetime

This content is made available for informational purposes only. The Hartford assumes no liability or responsibility for any injury, or damage suffered by any person as a result of the use of any information made available here.

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