

## 11-29-19 Sinkercises

Unless you are an athlete, or any kind of person driven toward physical achievement, you might be in the great majority of people challenged to achieve enough “steps” and exercise each and every day. I count myself in that category of people who are challenged to get enough exercise on a regular practice. This last year has been especially challenging after an injury last fall and the development of a painful foot condition. Something has helped, though.

Why “sink” into depression over our failures when a sink can help us do something about it?

I love to walk and that helps. What can we do when an injury prevents us from walking? What can we do when the weather is bad enough to prevent walking? What can we do when we only have a few minutes, rather than a half hour? Well, there is chair yoga. There is gentle stretching. And there are sinkercises!

My inspiration for my “sinkercises” arrived many years ago at a thrift shop. A customer was talking about her back problems. The woman at the register made a recommendation. She demonstrated for the customer how to grab onto the outer edge of the counter and let your body stretch out and let the hips and legs lower, further stretching the back.

I stood there, a young woman, with no back problems, aghast with the simplicity and practicality of this approach. This could be done at home, as needed, in a couple minutes, without a purchase of equipment.

From that moment in a thrift shop many years ago, I expanded the concept to stretching at the sink. Not every home has a two-sided counter, as in a shop, but everyone has a sink. And that sink, kitchen and/or bathroom, is sturdy! You can hold onto the front edge of it and stretch your hips out, squat down, raise up again, turn sideways, and stretch your left arm up and over. Then, turn to the other side and stretch the other side. Then, give your legs and hips another stretch. And then, you can push toward and pull away, strengthening the arms.

While it does not replace aerobic exercise, it does help us to achieve not only flexibility but also strength. Every time you squat and lift yourself up again, or stretch out and pull back in, it is like a push up. It is a foreword push-up, rather

than a vertical one. Also, it is easily achievable in a few minutes. It can happen at work or at home or even in an elevator on those grab bars! This is a way to make use of a few minutes in a positive way to achieve flexibility and strength.

In addition to the flexibility-improving and strengthening of the “sinkercises”, some daily squats up and out of a chair, repeatedly, and you will have done yourself a great favor, preventing injury by being stronger and more flexible. And, just as important, these exercises keep us capable; capable of getting out of a chair on our own, getting out of a car, continuing our independence and health as long as possible.

When we cannot do a lot, we look for what small things we can achieve.

Sinkercise before we sink!

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