

Be Fit While You Sit

Tuesday and Friday 1:00 - 2:00

This class, an Arthritis Foundation Exercise, involves exercising while — you guessed it — sitting. Pat, who is certified by the Arthritis Foundation, created the class and has led it for 10 years. "I started the class out of my own limitations," explains Pat, who suffers from severe arthritis herself. "I've had knee replacement, open heart surgery, lots of stuff like that."

The idea to do sitting down classes came from her own experience in physical therapy. She has since created a routine she leads her class through. And it is very popular — people arrive very early to claim their seat, though there are plenty of chairs to go around.

Pat starts the group out with an arm stretch, set to a song by Aretha Franklin. "Oh I love the music she plays," one student says to another. "Yes," comes the reply, "she plays the best music!" And indeed, throughout the hour of chair exercises you may hear James Brown, the beach Boys, and Marvin Gaye.

After some stretching Pat has everyone breathe in and then give a loud exhale "aaaaah!" They do that a few times and Pat laughs. "Are we all awake now?"



She has them sit up straight and twist around. Then some leg raises. "Now for a little bit of balance work. Stand up and hold onto your chair." Stand up in sitting class? "You don't have to do it if you don't want to," Pat tells the participants. But almost all of them do stand.

When everyone is safely back in their seats Pat guides them in the next phase of activity, and that is more stretching, this time with stretchy Dyna Bands. The class moves through a variety of exercises using the bands on their arms and legs. Pat talks and jokes as she leads them.



Next the class pauses as the members sip water and then they stand again, this time to dance. "Come on," encourages Pat, "you can dance in your chair if you want. It's easy on the bones, but it's fun!" The class does indeed dance, some in their seats, and many even sing along to the music.

Once the dance is over and everyone is sitting again, the class begins to wind down. Pat ends each class by asking the participants to close their eyes and breathe. She plays a brief pre-recorded visualization and the class mellows out. With a final exhale, they open their eyes and Pat smiles. "Peace be with you," she says. "I'll see you next time."