



# getting to grips with your **ACTIVATORs!**



## introduction

ACTIVATOR poles and the walking technique unique to the poles were co-developed by Mandy Shintani (a Canadian therapist). The poles are now being used extensively instead of passive mobility devices such as canes, crutches and even walkers (under the assessment of a therapist). The poles are modified versions of Nordic walking poles and designed to safely accommodate the needs of people with stability issues, older adults, individuals with chronic conditions, and rehabilitation patients.



## benefits of using ACTIVATOR poles

As an assistive walking device, ACTIVATOR poles can;

- improve posture
- enhance balance and stability
- improve co-ordination
- promote better gait patterns and speed
- improve mobility / range of motion of shoulder/neck area
- reduce impact and stress on hip and knee joints
- increase resistance for arms and upper body
- engage and strengthen core muscles
- raise intensity and increased caloric and energy expenditure
  
- build confidence and reduces fear of falling
- increase exercise/walking tolerance and excursion limits (walk further and longer)
  
- increase opportunities for social interaction
- enhanced self-esteem and overall sense of well-being



## key features

ACTIVATOR poles have a number of unique features designed for safety and effectiveness which distinguish them from Nordic walking and trekking poles.



### the handles

The strapless handle system of the ACTIVATOR allows the hand and wrist to be maintained in a neutral and wide grip position. A wide *ledge* at the base of the handle enables downward pressure.

There is a Right and Left handle (see the large L and R on top of the handles). They are ergonomically designed to provide greater comfort and prevent repetitive strain injury. They are designed so users can use a loose grip and position the hand and wrist in a natural, functional position.

### shock absorption

ACTIVATOR poles incorporate three key shock-absorbing features as follows:

- the *wide handles* have a shock absorption feature to minimize vibrations to the wrist, elbow and shoulder joints. It is designed so users can loosely grip the handle and position the hand and wrist in a natural and functional position.
- the *ferrule* at the base of the top section reduces vibration and noise.
- the large *bell-shaped tip* are made of high quality rubber which reduces vibration.

## stability

The wide, rubber, bell-shaped tip help ensure the poles remain upright while in use, ensures good traction and provides stability and allows for greater weight bearing than the traditional Nordic walking boot tip. The carbide steel tip provides more stability in slippery conditions.



The wide base of the handle provides support and core strengthening when the outside edge of the hand applies pressure to it.

## adjustability

ACTIVATOR poles feature telescopic shaft which can be adjusted for users from 145cm (4ft6in) up to 190cm (6ft) in height - and are collapsible for easy storage or travel. Adjustment is by way of a *button-lock* system which ensures that the poles:

- are locked securely for weight bearing and resistance exercises;
- have a higher weight capacity than Nordic poles and hiking poles;
- are much easier to adjust for people with finger/wrist problems such as arthritis or repetitive strain injury.



## durability

The ACTIVATOR poles  **durable construction** provides greater weight-bearing capacity - 200lbs per pole versus 20-90lbs per other walking poles. This helps prevent the locking system from collapsing while weight bearing.

# an ACTIVATOR session

## format of an ACTIVATOR session

The key physical activity recommendations for adults include;

- accumulate 10,000 steps per day;
- within which we should accumulate at least 30mins of moderately intensive (aerobic) activity;
- and also incorporate exercises to maintain/improve other key components of functional fitness including mobility, flexibility, strength and balance.

An ACTIVATOR Session aims to enable the user to achieve some of the above recommendations. The following session format is recommended

1. mobilisers (see p.5)
2. shufflers (see p.6)
3. period of walking (accumulating steps) and stops to incorporate strengtheners (see p.7)
4. stretchers! (see p.8)



# getting to grips

## setting the height

Hold the Left and Right poles in appropriate hands - the handles are marked L and R.

Stand tall with the poles on the floor and held upright. Adjust the pole length so that your elbows are at 90°.

Use the *silver* stripe on the bottom section of the poles to line up the button-lock system to the desired hole.

Ensure the button clicks securely into place.



## the technique

### **get a grip!**

step 1

Take the Right and Left poles in your right and left hands.

Wrap your fingers all the way around the handles and hold loosely. Do not grip the handles tightly.

Let the outside edge of your hands rest on the *ledge* at the base of the handles.

### **posture up!**

step 2

Stand tall, lift your shoulders up, back and down.

Place both poles in a forward, vertical position - elbows by your sides at 90°.

### **pick and place!**

step 3

*Pick* the right pole up and *place* it 'out front' as your left foot steps forward. The tip of the pole should land at the same time as the foot. Repeat the process with the left pole/arm and right foot (SWAP!).

Continue to keep the poles upright and your arms at a 90° angle while walking. Keep your arms moving from your shoulders.

### **plant and press!**

step 4

Begin to *plant* each pole by pressing down on the *ledge* as you *place* it. This action engages the core muscles - and intensifies the upper body workout, increasing stability and balance.

Remember not to grip the handles too tightly during the *planting* action.

### **video instruction**

Video instruction is available at  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCINgJsjOGI>



# mobilisers!

## general principles

- use slow, steady movements. No jerking.
- start with small movements and gradually enlarge.
- repeat each mobiliser 8-10 times. Do more on joints that are stiff or cold.
- do not mobilise a joint which is inflamed or painful.

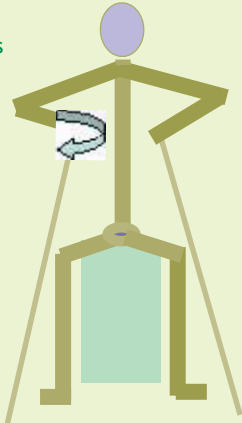
### massager

Sit tall to front of chair  
- feet forward and apart.

Place poles forward palms on top.

Slowly circle hands in 'massaging' action.

Gradually increase the size of the massaging action.

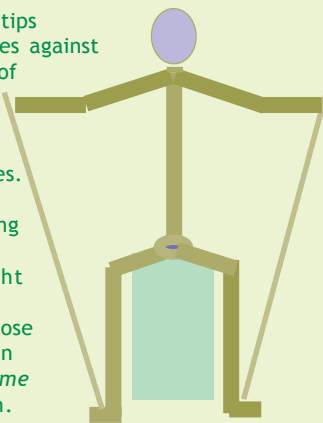


### welcomer

Sit tall to front of chair  
- feet forward and apart.

Place tips of poles against sides of feet and hold handles.

Keeping arms straight open and close arms in *welcome* action.

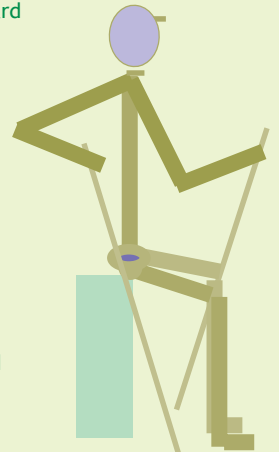


### gearshifter

Sit tall to front of chair  
- feet forward and apart.

Place poles forward to sides and hold handles.

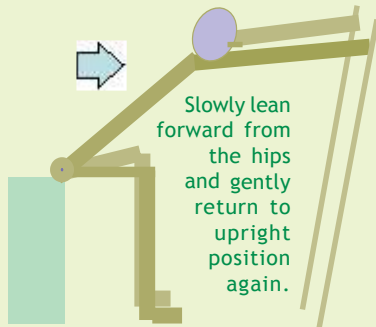
Move arms forward and backward in *gearshift* action.



### leaner

Sit tall to front of chair  
- feet forward and apart.

Place poles far forward and hold handles.



Slowly lean forward from the hips and gently return to upright position again.

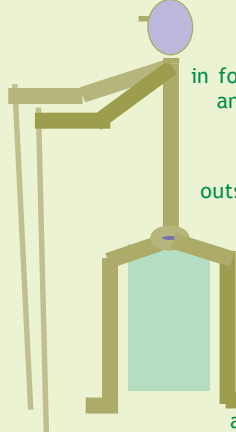
### twister

Sit tall to front of chair  
- feet forward and apart.

Place poles close together in forward position and hold handles.

TURN to right and place poles outside right foot. Return to centre and repeat left.

Progress from TURN to TWIST (twist trunk and turn head).



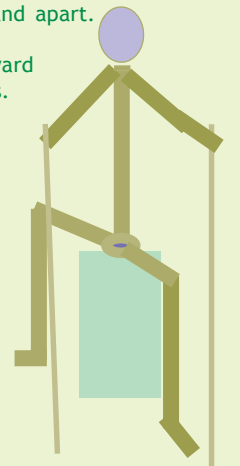
### hip and over!

Sit tall to front of chair  
- feet forward and apart.

Place poles forward and hold handles.

Slowly raise right knee, open hip, and lower to 3-o'clock position.

Raise knee, close hip, and lower to start position.



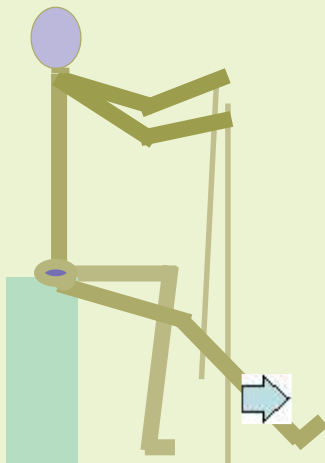
### highlander!

Sit tall to front of chair  
- feet forward and apart.

Place poles far forward and hold handles.

Raise one knee, extend lower leg, and place heel on the ground. Do not *snap* knee.

Raise foot and close knee fully so toe touches the ground under the chair



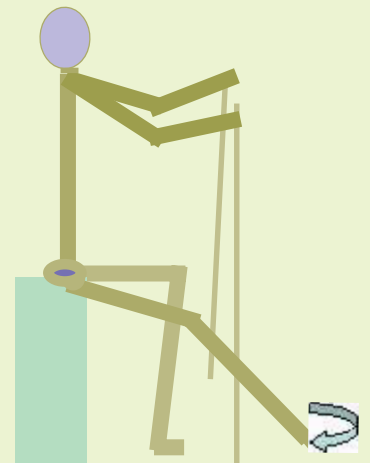
### ankle turner

Sit tall to front of chair  
- feet forward and apart.

Place poles far forward and hold handles.

Extend one leg and place heel on the ground.

Rotate ankle clockwise and then anti-clockwise.



# shufflers!

## general principles

- start with feet shoulder-width apart, knees soft.
- place poles forward and grip handles.
- maintaining good posture, head up, shoulders UP, BACK and DOWN

### stepping & stomping!

Keeping toes on ground start to lift heels up and down.

Progress to lifting feet off ground a little.

Progress to lifting knees - marching on the spot.

Progress to lifting knees - marching on the spot.

Progress to lifting poles in sync with the feet.

### tapping & tipping!

TAP right heel forward and return - repeat with left heel.

Progress to pushing tops of poles forward on each TAP.

Progress to TIPPING right toe backward - then left.

Progress to moving tops of poles on each toe TIP.

### siding!

Step to right with right foot  
Then bring left foot across to tap right foot.  
Repeat to other side.

Progress to lifting knee as foot comes across.

### shifting!

Start one foot ahead of the other, holding poles to the side.

Shift the weight from back to front foot and then reverse.

Progress to lifting back foot off on forward shift.

Progress to lifting front foot off on backward shift.

Reverse leg positions and repeat.

# strengtheners!

## general principles

- sit tall to the front of chair - feet forward and apart.
- maintain good posture, (head up and back straight) throughout the movement;
- do the movements very slowly and do not *stop* or *hold* at any point;
- share the resistance between legs and arms by pushing down on the base of the handles;
- repeat each exercise until the muscle involved feels *slightly tired*.

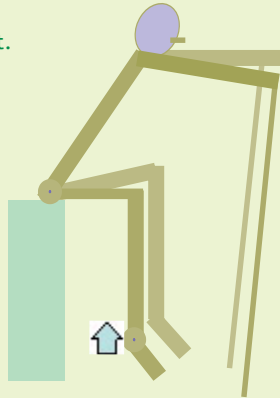
### heel raiser

Sit tall to front of chair  
- feet forward and apart.

Lean forward slightly  
and place poles  
and hold handles.

Slowly lean forward  
placing weight on feet  
and raise onto tiptoes.

Slowly lower to  
'flat feet' again.



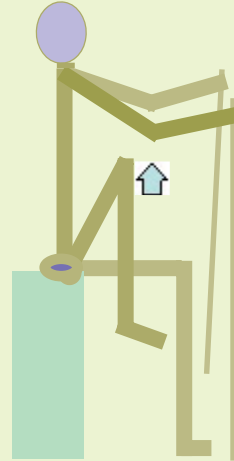
### knee raiser

Sit tall to front of chair  
- feet forward and apart.

Place poles forward  
and hold handles.

Slowly raise one knee to  
highest point.

Slowly lower to  
start position again.

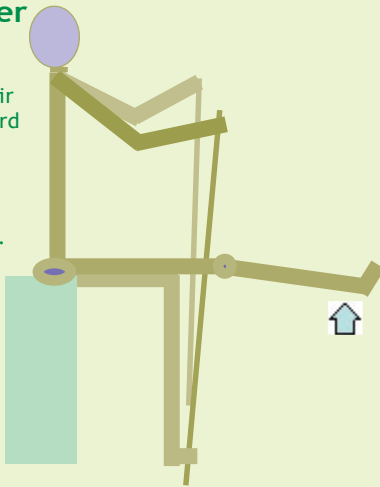


### toe raiser

Sit tall to  
front of chair  
- feet forward  
and apart.

Place poles  
forward and  
hold handles.

Slowly raise  
one foot  
until leg is  
horizontal.  
Slowly lower  
foot to  
start

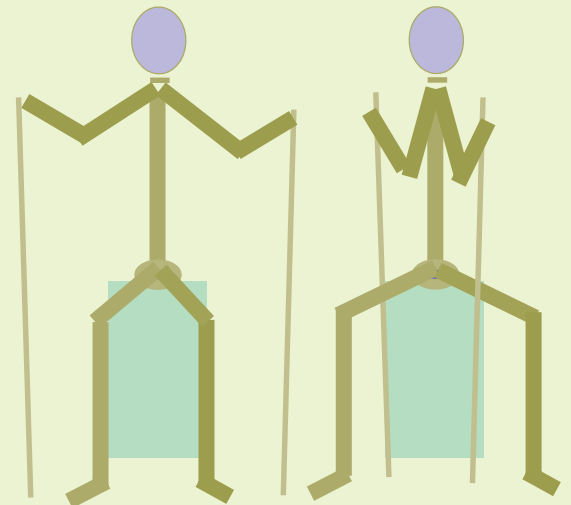


### switchers

Start with  
poles apart  
and feet  
together.

In one  
movement  
lift and  
move the  
feet apart  
while  
bringing  
the poles  
together.

Repeat in  
reverse.



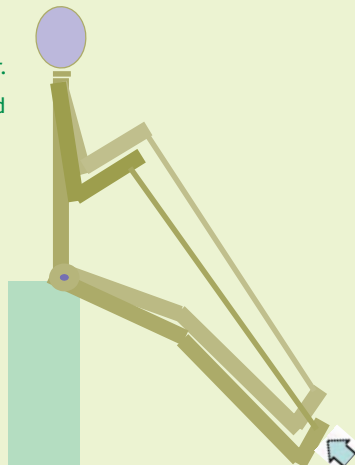
### toe puller

Sit tall to front of chair.  
Place both feet forward  
- heels on ground.

Place tips of poles on  
toes of each foot.

Slowly pull the toes  
upward while applying  
a slight downward  
pressure  
with the poles.

Slowly do the action  
in reverse.



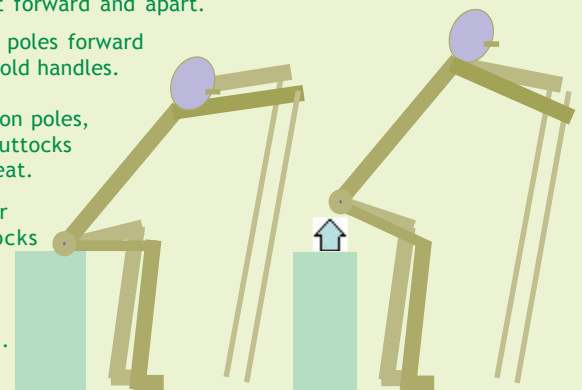
### lifter

Sit tall to front of chair  
- feet forward and apart.

Place poles forward  
and hold handles.

Lean on poles,  
lift buttocks  
off seat.

Lower  
buttocks  
again  
onto  
seat  
again.



# stretchers!

**general principles**

- For each stretcher below;
- use slow, steady movement. No bouncing.
  - go to the point of mild tension, hold for 5-8secs.
  - repeat single leg stretches on other leg.
  - breathe normally. Do not hold breath.
  - do not stretch if pain presents.

**reacher**

Seated to front of chair/bench.

Place poles forward - palms facing in.

Extend arms fully.

Lean forward - back straight, head up.

**opener**

Seated to front of chair/bench.

Place poles forward - palms facing in.

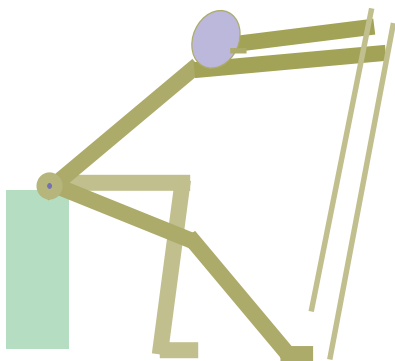
Slowly open arms to side and push chest through.

**backhander**

Seated to front of chair/bench.

Hold both poles in palms behind back - palms facing backward.

Slowly raise poles away from butt - extending arms behind and upward.



For each of the leg stretchers below

- place one heel forward.
- keep arms fully extended.
- slowly lean forward keeping back straight and head up.

**hamstrings**  
foot in *normal* position.

**calves**  
heel forward  
toes pulled back

**shins**  
press foot to floor

