

Wheelchair Exercises for Weight Loss

Looking after your fitness levels is vital for both the health of your body and for your mind. Exercising increases your stamina, helps you to lose weight and releases endorphins which give you a positive mental boost. You might think that getting the regular exercise that you need if you're in a [wheelchair](#) is impossible, but there are plenty of ways in which you can keep fit and active. Most things you would think of for exercises can easily be adapted so that you can perform them from your wheelchair.

In this month's special post we're going to take you through a whole host of wheelchair exercises for weight loss. Ranging from the super simple stuff to the slightly more intense and complicated movements, the exercises on this list could certainly help you with your weight loss goals.

Bicep Curl

A simple movement, this exercise works your shoulders as well as your bicep, keeping your arms strong and healthy. Ensure that you are sat up straight and that your back is well supported in your chair. Now, using a small weight to begin with you should curl your arm up so the weight comes to your shoulder level. Lower your arm back down in a steady, smooth motion and repeat for your opposite arm. Once you've mastered small weights you should try to progress steadily with increased weights.

Overhead Press

Again, starting out with smaller weights and working upwards, the overhead press can be done with weights in a seated position. Ensure you have back support and begin with your arms by your side, holding the weights at shoulder height. From here you should lift the weights above your head in a smooth motion. This works your deltoids and improves your strength.

Abdominal Twist

If you need a weightless workout then the abdominal twist is great. Keep your spine extended and simply twist your upper body from left to right and then right to left so you're facing to your side each time. Be careful not to strain too far and, if you need support, lay your arms flat on your arm rests and grip them to stabilise yourself. You shouldn't jerk in a quick motion, it should be smooth and slow, holding the twist for 5-10 seconds each.

Chest Presses

Using a medicine ball you can perform [chest presses from your chair](#). Press the medicine ball to your chest with your hands on each side, bending your elbows, then push the ball outwards until your elbows almost lock. This is a great, easy way to work your chest muscles, simply ensure your back is in a comfortable position first.

Seated Woodchop

Another great exercise which utilises the medicine ball is the seated woodchop. This is designed to work your core abdominal muscles but is easy to do in your wheelchair. Hold the ball beside your right hand side at your hip, turning your upper body slightly. Then lift the ball across your body reaching above your opposite shoulder. Alternate the left-to-right switch to ensure you work both sides of your body.

Using Kettlebells

There are plenty of exercises you can perform using kettlebells to build up your strength, but be sure to start off with lighter weights before you try to tackle heavy weights as this could do you more damage in the long run.

- Shoulder raises
- Shoulder presses
- Bicep curls
- Forearm raises
- Chest presses
- Oblique stretches
- Side strokes
- Tricep kickbacks
- Tricep extensions

Pull Ups

Whether you do this at a gym or get a pull up bar to install in your home, it's a great way to exercise your back muscles as well as other upper body muscles. Simply align yourself under the pull up bar, reach out and place your grip shoulder length apart then, using only your arms, raise your body up as far as you can. It doesn't matter if you can't lift yourself all the way up at first, over time you should build the strength to reach that point. Ensure you don't strain your back too hard and have someone spot for you during this exercise in case you encounter difficulties.

Training Rollers

Training rollers allow you to stay in one place but exercise as if you were going out and about. The back wheels of your chair sit on rollers, as you propel yourself you will remain static but your wheels will roll. This simulates the action of

travelling outdoors and gives you vital exercise if the conditions aren't suitable outside due to inclement weather.

Weighted Punches/Speedbag

Several options are available to you if you want to train with punching or boxing. You can either use weights, getting heavier progressively, to perform weighted punches from a seated position, or you can use a speedbag if you're already beyond the novice stage. The speedbag can be adjusted in height giving you different reaches and working different muscle groups in your arms shoulders and back.

Wheelchair Sports

Generic as it may sound, the most fun way you can get exercise and aid your weight loss attempts is by getting involved with a sport. There are plenty of options to choose from when it comes to wheelchair sports and you might even be able to find a team nearby to you. Swimming, given appropriate apparatus and supervision is on hand, can be a great workout for your entire body and reduces the strain put on your joints, while something such as basketball will give a competitive edge to your exercise, working your arms and shoulders and improving your strength.

Staying at a healthy body weight is important regardless of whether you are in a wheelchair or not. These are just some of the ways you could get vital exercise and strength training at home or in your local community. To get further advice and receive specialist assistance, get in touch with you local gym who should be able to assign you a fitness instructor to build a routine with. After a while you should gain more confidence in your abilities, allowing you to progress your routine and tackle your weight loss head on with your own schedule.

