

**UP!**

**ON**

**STEP**



## The Ubiquitous Step.

They really are literally everywhere. You most likely have some right in your own home. Did you know that they could be an effective conditioning tool? You don't see any infomercials advertising them only because the hucksters (not the Huskers) can't make any money selling them, but you can certainly profit by using them. They're free, readily available and could improve your physical fitness, so why not take advantage of using them.

If you can safely climb a flight of stairs, start with one floor and consider gradually increasing the number of flights or the frequency of stairclimbing over time. If you can't climb stairs because they aggravate your musculoskeletal system, there is another way that you may still be able to use them. Start by stepping up on a single step. Move back slightly from the bottom step to limit the bend created in your knee. Stand at attention, with your back straight and shoulders back slowly step up and back down. Start with as little as one step up and do these step ups as infrequently as two well-spaced days per week. Very gradually over weeks of time, as tolerated by your knees, increase the number of step ups. Further progressions could include, pressing your arms overhead as you step up and lowering them as you step back down. Be sure to keep your back straight and shoulders back and make sure that pressing overhead doesn't irritate your shoulders. Other advanced progressions could include rising up on your toes as you step up or stepping up on two steps at a time instead of just one. Keep your movements controlled. The goal is to build strength over time without injuring your body. Pain is a warning that you are doing more grief than good. Discontinue the step ups and see a clinician if you can't do the step ups without irritating your musculoskeletal system. If you strengthen the muscles that cross the joints of your legs, it may ultimately be possible to climb flights of stairs pain free.

Here's a UNMC Today about murals on the landings of a stairwell in University Tower – [A stairwell worth a stare](#). Check them out!

[Piano Stairs](#) video link