



Exercise for Parkinson's

The Brian Grant Foundation empowers people impacted by Parkinson's disease to lead active and fulfilling lives



EXERCISE FOR PARKINSON'S OVERVIEW

Exercise is essential for people with Parkinson's

Exercise is important for maintaining health for everyone. For people with Parkinson's, exercise can improve quality of life and may help improve some of the motor and non-motor symptoms of the disease. Overall, exercise can benefit people with Parkinson's in the following ways:

Motor Symptom Management

Research has shown that exercise improves flexibility, balance, coordination, agility, gait, and strength.

Non-Motor Symptom Management

Exercise may positively impact depression, apathy, cognition, and sleep difficulties.

Delay Mobility Decline

Studies suggest that exercise may help delay some of the common symptoms of the disease.



HOW DO I EXERCISE SAFELY WITH PARKINSON'S?

Exercise is essential for people with Parkinson's, but balance problems and other symptoms can increase the risk of falling. Here are some things to consider when starting or engaging in an exercise routine:

Talk To Your Healthcare Provider

Whether it's your neurologist, physician, or physical therapist, make sure you've talked to a healthcare provider about your exercise program, especially if you're considering a new physical activity or experiencing new or worsening symptoms.

Time Your Medications

Many people with Parkinson's have "on times" when their medications are most effective at alleviating symptoms. Exercising during on times may help reduce the risk of falling and other problems associated with Parkinson's. Talk to your healthcare provider about medication timing for optimal exercise.

Stay Hydrated

Low blood pressure and dizziness are common in Parkinson's. Staying hydrated with water or sports drinks may help reduce the risk of falling.

Be Mindful of Symptoms

Both motor and non-motor symptoms can increase fall risk. Be mindful of your symptoms and check in with your healthcare provider if you're experiencing new or worsening symptoms.



HOW OFTEN AND HOW HARD SHOULD I EXERCISE?

Any exercise is better than none! However, experts recommend that people with Parkinson's should aim for the following for how often and how hard to exercise:

- Begin training in the early stages of Parkinson's
- Train most days of the week for at least 150 minutes per week
- Add mental and physical challenges when appropriate and safe
- Train at higher intensity levels, meaning you can still talk while training but in short bursts



WHAT TYPES OF EXERCISES ARE RECOMMENDED FOR PARKINSON'S?

Above all, do what you enjoy! When you engage in activities that make you feel safe and confident, exercise can be fun as well as healthy. For people with Parkinson's, aerobic exercise, stretching, and strength and balance training form the foundation of a good exercise program. Here are some suggestions for building a good foundation for your Parkinson's exercise program:

1. Build endurance through aerobic activity.

- Research suggests aerobic activity supports positive changes in the brain.
- Aerobic activity can include high intensity walking, running, swimming, or biking.
- Aim for 3 days per week, 30-40 minutes per session of aerobic exercise.

2. Improve and maintain flexibility with stretching.

- Improving flexibility can facilitate better posture and better movement.
- A whole-body stretching routine that includes breathing can be particularly beneficial.
- Aim to stretch for 2-3 days per week, for 20-30 minutes.

3. Strengthen muscle groups, with a focus on extensor muscles to improve posture.

- Strength training with weights, resistance bands or body weight can help symptoms.
- Strengthening extension muscles, including back, hips, and triceps, can help posture.
- Aim for 2-3 days per week, 20-30 minutes per session of strength training.

4. Add balance and agility training to reduce the risk of falls.

- Balance problems are common in Parkinson's and can be improved through training.
- Balance and agility exercises can be added to aerobics, stretching, and strength training.
- Aim for 2-3 days per week, 20-30 minutes per session of balance training.





HOW DO I CREATE AN EXERCISE PROGRAM?

A visit to a physical therapist is a good place to start building an exercise program. Physical therapists can talk with you about your symptoms and personal goals to design an exercise program that is effective and enjoyable. They can also help you find exercise classes in your area.

Incorporating activities that have been shown to address specific symptoms can help you practice and maintain everyday motor functions that directly impact quality of life. Some exercise principles to consider for your exercise program include:

1. Use BIG, full amplitude, whole-body movements to help improve slow, small movements.
2. Practice dual tasks and cognitive challenges when appropriate and safe.
3. Practice self-initiated and self-paced movement to help with freezing.
4. Practice reciprocal, coordinated arm and leg movements to help uneven arm swings.
5. Practice tall, upright posture to help with stooped posture.
6. Use strong voices while exercising to help with voice quality.
7. Improve sensory integration by varying surfaces and reducing visual input.
8. Practice fast movements to help with slow movements.
9. Build mind/body connections for self-awareness and relaxation.
10. Do activities that are challenging, engaging, fun, social and safe.



ONLINE EXERCISE VIDEOS

BGF has developed a 60-minute program that includes the exercise recommendations and principles for Parkinson's. Follow along online at briangrant.org.



Get more exercise information
and exercise videos at

briangrant.org

