Exercise Recommendations

If you have Parkinson's, exercise is your friend. It provides many benefits to help you manage your disease. Exercise supports balance and motor coordination, promotes neuroplasticity or the brain's ability to form new connections, and eases fatigue and depression. The bottom line: Exercise makes you feel better!

Experts recommend four areas to make sure you cover each week:

- **Aerobic Activity:** At least 30 minutes of moderate activities like brisk walking and cycling, 3 times a week
- **Strength Training:** Lift weights or use resistance bands 2-3 times a week
- **Balance and Agility Activities:** To improve posture and prevents falls, try Tai Chi, boxing or yoga 2-3 times a week
- **Stretching:** Reduce muscle stiffness and rigidity by stretching at least 2 to 3 days a week; daily is even better.

Your best bet is to move every day, multiple times throughout the day.

Diagnosed and already physically active every day? Continue with your current exercise routine and:

- Add in some Parkinson's Specific Exercises like LSVT Big Movements or PWR! Moves. These movements can be done anywhere with no special equipment.
- Work with a physical therapist to establish your current baseline and to determine if there are movements you need to improve and limitations to look out for in the future.
- Build a routine you will stick to. Movement needs to address all areas of potential challenges resulting from Parkinson's...posture, balance, rotation and stiffness, amplitude. Keep movements big.
- The goal is to stay ahead of your symptoms!

Diagnosed and not currently physically active every day? Now is the time to start!

- It can be daunting to start an exercise routine. Just pick something to establish a routine. You can change or add to it later.
- There is no shortage of things to do. Exercise at home, join a fitness club, work with a personal trainer, use a video workout, or just visit a local park for a walk. No matter your fitness level or experience, there are options for you.
- Keep a positive attitude. You may not want to exercise, but you always will feel better afterwards! Remember, exercise is medicine and is meant to support you.

EXERCISE CLASSES

A few options include Rock Steady Boxing, Parkinson's Cycling, a PWR! Moves class for Parkinson's, Yoga, Dance, or Tai Chi. Try something that sounds interesting or fun. If you don't like it, you can always find something else. The great thing about classes is the camaraderie of being around other people with Parkinson's. It's a great place for new friendships and to ask questions of others dealing with the same or similar experiences you may be having.

BASIC STRENGTH TRAINING

Depending on your fitness level, Sit to Stands or Squats build lower body strength. For upper body strength, focus on pushing movements and try Elevated Push-ups against a wall, countertop or table. W's and T's or Pull-Aparts using a theraband work on posture and building upper body strength. Elevated Planks from a wall, countertop or chair and seated Opposite Arm & Leg Extensions will build your core. For Glute Bridges, lie on your back in a supine position, bend your knees, and lift your hips up to engage glute muscles.

BALANCE EXERCISES

Daily exercises are important to help improve or maintain your ability to balance when doing everyday movements. These exercises should always be done in a safe environment with something sturdy nearby to hold on to if needed. It is also recommended that you have someone with you in case of an accidental fall. Be sure the floor area is clear of any tripping hazards. Try this progression of moves to improve your balance while keeping things interesting.

Balance Stance: Start with a narrow stance with feet side by side, touching if possible. See if you can maintain this position over time. (start with 20-30 seconds)

Staggered Stance: With feet offset, one forward and one back, distribute weight equally on both feet. Remember to practice on both sides since one side will feel more stable than the other.

Tandem Stance: Similar to a staggered stance but with feet much closer together. Place one foot directly in front of the other with the heel of the front foot touching the toe of the back foot.

Slow March: With feet hip-wide apart, slowly begin to march. Imagine your feet are stuck in something sticky like gum or molasses and slowly lift and lower one foot at a time, so you spend a few seconds in a single leg balance.

Single Leg Balance: Start with feet hip-wide apart, then shift your weight from right foot to left foot until your weight has completely shifted and you can lift your right foot off the ground. Work up to standing on each leg for 20-30 seconds. When working on balance, remember to focus your eyes on something that isn't moving, keep your upper body lifted with shoulders pinched back and abdominal muscles engaged while your lower body has hips hinged back and the knee on the standing leg softly bent to engage your glutes, and, most importantly, breathe.

CARDIO / MOVEMENT

There is no shortage of ways to get in a cardio workout. March in place, take a walk around the house or driveway or around the block. Try biking, either on a stationary bike or by going for a bike ride. Dance with your partner or by yourself to get your heart going. Classes can provide structure and be more motivating to encourage you to work a little harder. Remember, you don't have to attend in-person classes as you can find classes on demand on your computer or streaming on tv.

NEUROMOTOR ACTIVITY

There are simple ways to incorporate neuromotor activities into some of your other exercises. For instance, when you are performing your balance stances try naming an animal for each letter of the alphabet in order. Do a cognitive activity, such as putting together a puzzle or doing a crossword game, while also doing a fine motor activity with your other hand, such as walking your fingers down a pole, squeezing a ball or rotating golf balls in your hand. These types of activities cause both sides of the brain to engage, requiring them to communicate with each other to accomplish both activities at once. There are endless options for Neuroplasticity activities.

FLEXIBILITY

Seated or standing stretching moves will help keep you flexible. You can also take classes that focus more on movement and mobility, such as Yoga or Tai Chi. Again, classes can be done in person or from the comfort of your home. Whether you are able to stand or need to sit, there are plenty of options available for any fitness level. Also, the PWR! Moves program works on flexibility and movement to help keep you mobile.

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