

Exercises for People with Parkinson's



Having Parkinson's does not mean you should sit down and stop being active. Actually the opposite is true. Exercise, which includes being active, stretching, practicing good posture and doing specific exercises, should be a key component of your daily life.



WHY IS EXERCISE IMPORTANT FOR PEOPLE WITH PARKINSON'S?

Being active is one of the most important things you can do to maintain your physical and mental well-being.

Exercise will not alter the progression of Parkinson's but it is essential for maintaining your quality of life.

Studies clearly show that people with Parkinson's who exercise fare better in the long run than people with Parkinson's who do not exercise.

People with Parkinson's need to exercise to prevent the negative effects of inactivity. Moving, stretching and exercising as much as you can will also help prevent

secondary effects that may develop such as:

- Poor posture
- Decreasing range of movement (losing flexibility)
- Decreased strength particularly in the muscles that hold you upright, resulting in a tendency to stoop forward
- Decreasing endurance (being out of breath or fatigued)
- Poor balance

Choose **CHOOSE A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES – AND MINUTES COUNT!**

Most people will say they gain strength, flexibility and balance by being active. How can you be active? There are many ways:

Aerobic activities such as:

- Using a treadmill
- Using a stationary bike or rowing machine
- Walking
- Swimming
- Dancing

Other activities such as:

- Yoga
- Tai Chi
- Pilates
- Golf
- Gardening
- Exercises – sitting or standing
- And many more...

The greatest benefit comes from doing things that YOU enjoy. Some activities will give you more benefit than others. However, consistency is more important than the specific activity you choose to do. Perhaps do more of what you are already doing. Begin with activities you can do comfortably – listen to your body! Choose the time of day that is best for you to do your exercises.

Gradually add minutes of activity to your program. Minutes count and your goal is to build up your activity level to a total of 30 to 60 minutes a day.

It is never too late to become active. Here are some specific ideas you can try to increase your activity level:

- Take a walk
 - Walk 20 steps in your normal way
 - Then take 20 long steps
 - Then 20 normal steps
 - Then swing your arms for 20 steps
 - Repeat for the duration of your walk
- Get off the bus one stop early or park the car one block away
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator
- Lift cans of soup, or any small weight, to exercise your arms (see strengthening exercises section)
- Do leg exercises while watching television.
- Join an exercise class. One of the best ways to stay motivated is to exercise with others. See our listing of regional contacts on page 12. Call them for suggestions about programs that may be available in your community.
- Play your favorite music and dance or move to the beat!

Remember, be sure to only choose activities that you feel safe doing. It is always wise to check with your doctor before starting an exercise program.

A physiotherapist may be an excellent resource for creating an exercise program to suit you personally. Consider consulting one.

Posture **POSTURE**

Some of the first noticeable changes with Parkinson's are in your posture. There is a tendency for the shoulders to slump, the chin to stick out, and the elbows and knees to bend slightly. This makes the following more difficult:

- Breathing deeply
- Swallowing
- Speaking clearly and loudly
- Moving, balancing, and walking

The following photo illustrates common Parkinson's Posture:



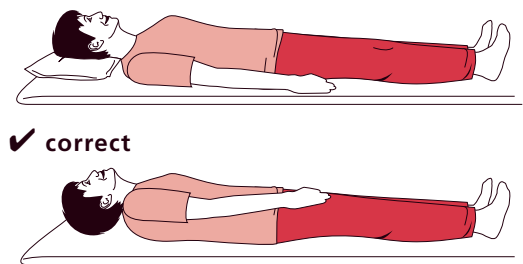
You can help to prevent these changes.

MAKE GOOD POSTURE A HABIT

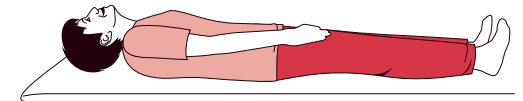
You can change your posture. When trying to develop good posture, repetition is very important. These suggestions need to be practiced frequently throughout your day – do not think of them as exercises to be done once a day and then forgotten.

Try to find a cue that will remind you to do these activities frequently. For example, if you are watching TV, you could do one activity each time a show breaks for a commercial.

1) Each day (as often as you can) check your posture. Stand against a wall and be sure your lower back and shoulder BLADES are touching the wall. Try to pull the back of your head towards the wall as well. Do not TIP your head back. As you walk away try to maintain this posture. Recheck at the next available wall. Or pick a spot in your home, ie. on the way into the bathroom or kitchen. Each time you walk past it, stop and do this posture check.



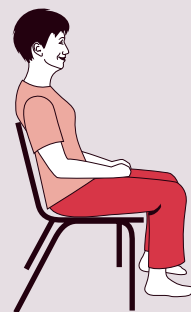
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2) When you wake each morning, lie flat on your back, with just enough support to keep your head and neck from tipping back for 5 minutes. Do not press your shoulders or head back into the bed. RELAX! Allow gravity to stretch you as straight as possible. You may do this on the floor or other firm surface if you prefer.

3) Every time you sit in a chair, make your shoulder blades touch the back of the chair. Hold for a few seconds. Do this three times, each time you sit down.



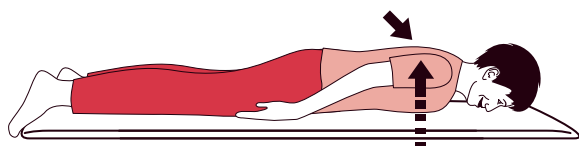
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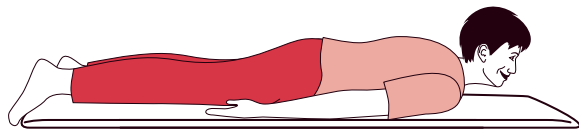
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MAKE GOOD POSTURE A HABIT

4) Sitting in a chair, relax forward and let your arms and head hang down toward the floor. Then slowly roll back up starting low in your spine and letting your head come up last. Sit tall for several seconds. (If low blood pressure is a problem, skip this exercise.)



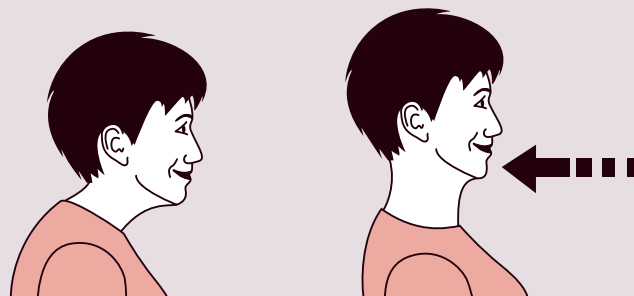
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5) Lie face down on the bed or on a mat on the floor with your arms beside you. Gently pull your shoulder blades together. Keeping your head and neck in a straight line lift slightly. Hold for a few seconds. **DO NOT LIFT WITH YOUR LOWER BACK.**

6) Anytime you are sitting or standing, gently pull your chin straight in and straighten your neck. **BE SURE NOT TO TIP YOUR HEAD BACK.** Hold this position for five seconds and relax. Try not to let your head drop all the way forward again when you relax.



Begin

End

Flexibility **FLEXIBILITY OR STRETCHING**

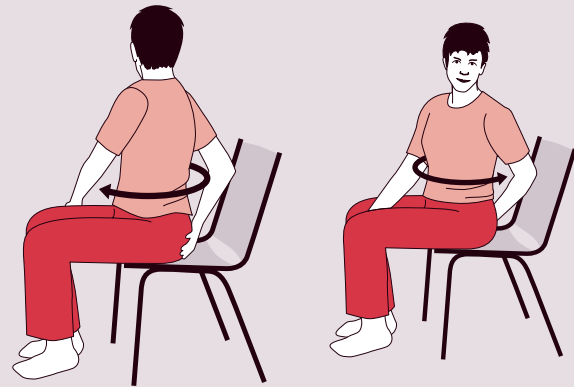
If you are less active and allow poor posture to develop, gradually over time your muscles and joints will tighten. Flexibility or stretching activities help you to maintain good range of movement in all of your joints and muscles. They are different than strengthening exercises because you hold positions and relax, allowing your muscles to gently stretch. Not everyone needs to do all of the following stretches. Choose any that seem right for you. Choose

one or two to do before the strengthening exercises in the next section, then complete the rest of your chosen stretches after the strengthening exercises.

Safety Tips for Stretching Activities

- Stretch slowly without bouncing or jerking the movements.
- Hold the stretch in a comfortable position long enough for the muscles to relax
- Aim for a stretched, relaxed feeling – avoid pain.
- Breathe naturally – don't hold your breath.

1) Sit tall on the edge of your seat. Turn your shoulders to the right. Reach your right hand behind you and stretch it towards your left hip. Turn your head and body as well. Relax your muscles and hold that position for at least ten seconds. **STAY TALL!** Repeat the other way.

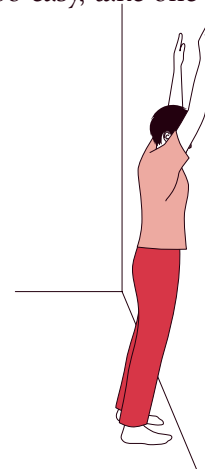


2a) If you are tall enough, stand in a doorway and rest your hands on the frame overhead. Keep your arms straight. Gently lean forward. Feel a gentle stretch in your shoulders and chest. **DO NOT OVERSTRETCH!** Hold for at least ten seconds.



2b) Stand facing a wall with your feet about a foot from the wall. Place your hands as high up on the wall as possible. Keep your head in line with your back. Gently lean forward so that your nose touches the wall. Don't arch your back. Feel the stretch in your shoulders and chest. Hold for at least ten seconds. If this is too easy, take one step back and try from this position.

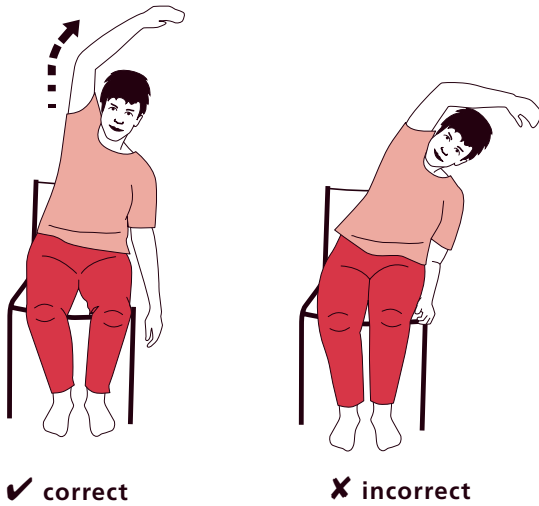
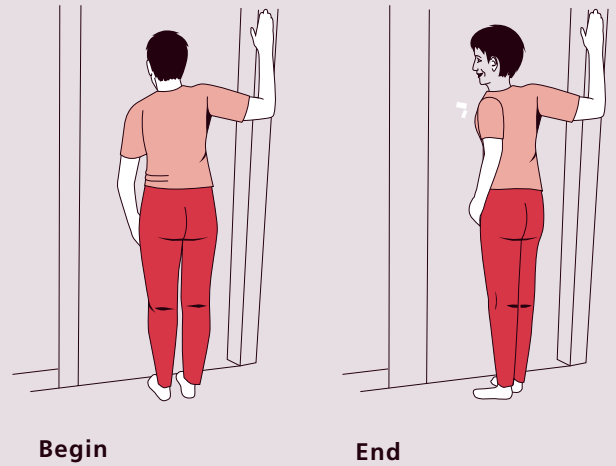
OR



Flexibility

FLEXIBILITY OR STRETCHING

3) Stand in a doorway. Bend your right arm. Rest your hand and forearm on the doorframe beside you. Gently turn your whole body to the left. Feel a stretch in your right shoulder. **DO NOT OVER STRETCH!** Relax the muscles in that shoulder. Hold for at least ten seconds. Repeat the other way.



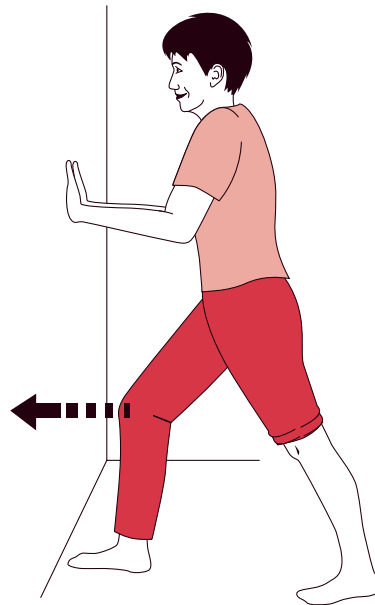
4) Sit tall in a chair. With your right arm curved over your head, slowly reach for the opposite wall. Do not tip your body. **DO NOT BEND FORWARD.** Feel a stretch in your right side muscles. Hold for at least ten seconds. Repeat the other way.

5) Lie on your back on a firm surface. Allow one leg to hang over the side. Press your back flat on the firm surface. Relax your leg that is hanging over, from the knee down. Feel a gentle stretch in the front of your hip. Allow your hip muscles to relax. Hold for at least ten seconds. Repeat with your other leg.



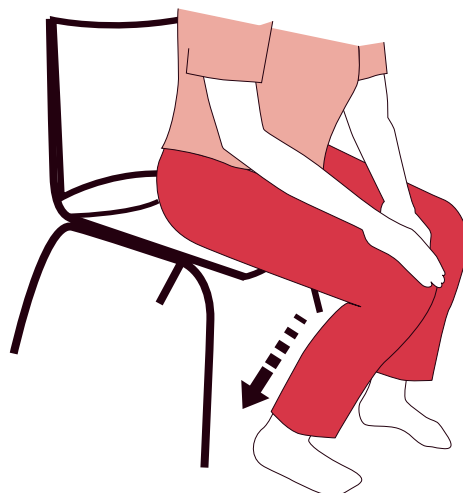
Flexibility
FLEXIBILITY OR STRETCHING

6a) Stand facing a wall (or hold a chair back for support). Rest hands on wall for balance. Place your left foot a comfortable distance behind your right foot. Keep your left leg straight, and gently bend your right knee leaning towards the wall. Feel a stretch in your left heel and calf. Hold for at least ten seconds. Repeat with the other leg.



OR

6b) Sit on the edge of a chair. Move right foot back under the chair so that your heel is slightly off the floor. Place your hands on your right knee and press down until your heel touches the floor. Allow your calf muscles to relax. Feel a stretch in your heel and calf. Hold for at least ten seconds. Repeat with left foot.



Strengthening **STRENGTHENING EXERCISES**

Strengthening exercises challenge your muscles to remain healthy and strong. They require you to use your muscles repeatedly in a specific, controlled way. They can include activities such as golf or gardening or specific exercises. When you do regular activity and exercise you are:

- able to maintain and improve muscle strength
- able to improve balance and posture
- less likely to fall
- able to get around more safely
- able to carry out more daily activities.

If you do not have access to an exercise facility or a physiotherapist, here are some exercises that are particularly useful for people with Parkinson's. Adjust these exercises to suit your needs. If balance is a

problem, stand behind a sturdy chair that will not tip easily and use the chair back for support. You may enjoy doing these exercises to music.

As you gain confidence in doing these exercises, use the chair back less for support. If you can eventually do these exercises without the support of the chair, you will be developing your balance even more.

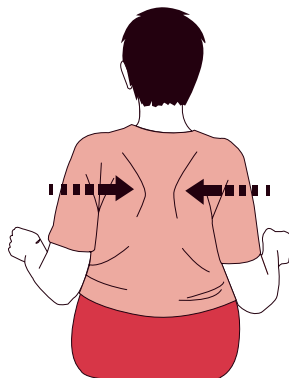
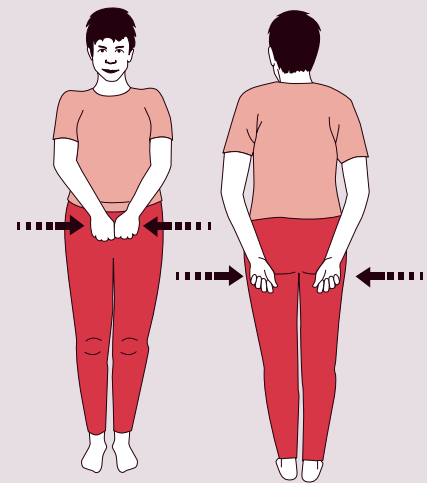
All of the following exercises may not be right for you. Choose the ones you feel safe doing.

Some people like to do all of their exercises at one time while others prefer doing their exercises for short periods at different times during the day. Either way is correct.

DO EACH EXERCISE TEN TIMES IF YOU CAN.

DO EACH EXERCISE SLOWLY AND IN A CONTROLLED WAY.

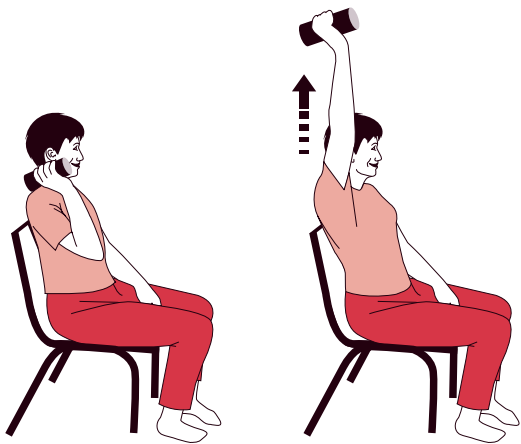
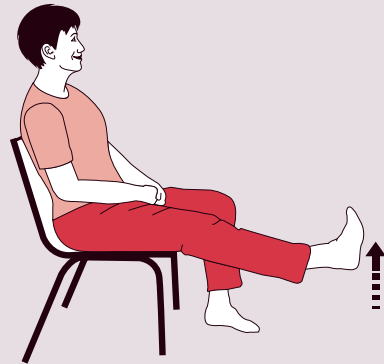
1) Sit or stand tall. Keeping arms straight, slowly touch fists together in front and then behind your back. Pull your shoulder blades together as you touch in back.



2) Sit or stand tall. Keep elbows at ninety degrees. Pull shoulder blades together in back.

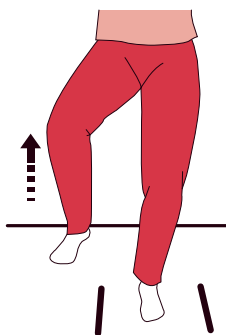
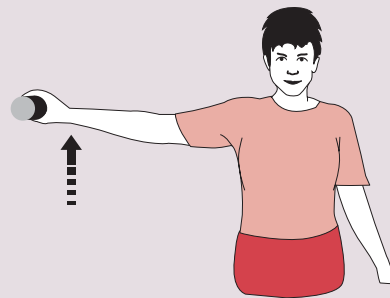
Strengthening **STRENGTHENING EXERCISES**

3) Sit in a chair. Slowly straighten out one leg, hold and lower. Repeat with other leg. To increase your strength, add a small weight around your ankle.



4) Sit or stand tall. Hold a can of soup or any small weight in each hand. Push one hand towards the ceiling and lower. Repeat with other hand. Try to push as high as possible with each hand.

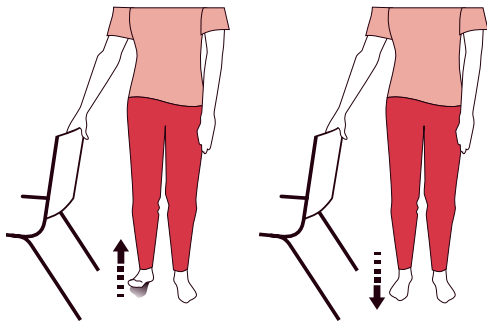
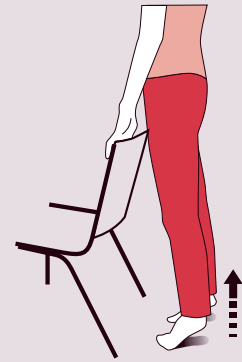
5) Stand with back against a wall. Hold a can of soup or other small weight in each hand. Keeping your elbow against the wall, lift one arm to shoulder level and lower. Repeat with other arm.



6) Step sideways across the room, lifting your knees as high as you can. Pretend you are stepping over sticks. Side step back.

Strengthening **STRENGTHENING EXERCISES**

7) Stand behind a chair. If necessary, rest your hands on the back for support. Go up on your toes and come down flat.



8) Stand or sit. Pull up the toes of one foot and replace. Repeat with other foot. You can do this one foot at a time or alternating feet.

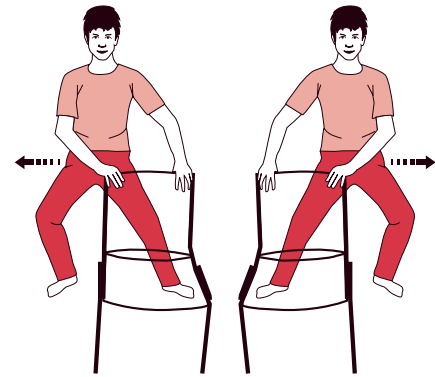
9) Stand tall with feet apart. Rest hands on a chair back for support if necessary. Slowly do small knee bends. Concentrate on squeezing the muscles in your buttocks when you straighten.



10) Stand tall. Hold the back of a chair for support if necessary. Keep your right leg straight. Slide your right leg back as far as you comfortably can. Repeat with other leg.

Strengthening **STRENGTHENING EXERCISES**

11) Stand tall with feet wide apart. Hold the back of a chair for support if necessary. Lean on one bent knee and then the other. When you feel steady, try this without holding on.



12) March (around the room or outside). Ten steps.

March with long steps. Ten steps.

March. Ten steps.

March with knees high. Ten steps.

March. Ten steps.

March and swing arms. Ten steps.

Note: This can be done while sitting, just march in your seat with no long steps. It is more fun with music.

13) Exercises for the facial muscle groups can help to retain muscle integrity and the range of motion in the face and mouth – helping the range of facial expressions. Begin with a gentle rubbing of the face, like putting on cream. Repeat each of the following exercises a couple of times:

- Sour Lemon – tighten your facial muscles as if sucking on a lemon, then relax
- Eyebrow raising/frowning – lift your eyebrows to look surprised. Frown, creasing your forehead towards your eyes.
- Yawning – yawn dramatically
- Smiling – try smiling with your lips open, and then try again with your lips closed.

THE MORE ACTIVE YOU ARE, THE BETTER YOU FEEL!!!

More active people prolong their independence whether or not they have Parkinson's.

Even if you have not been very active, once you get started your body will adjust. Just try something ... a little bit every day will make a difference. When planning your exercise program, it is best to choose a variety of activities to do on

different days. For example, you might do exercises on one day, go for a walk the next and go swimming or do tai chi the next. Your schedule should suit your personal circumstances. Choosing a variety of activities is not only better for your overall health and fitness; it is also less likely to lead to boredom with your exercise program.

Parkinson Society Canada is the national voice of Canadians living with Parkinson's. Our purpose is to ease the burden and find a cure through research, education, advocacy and support services.

Parkinson Society Canada's National Information & Referral Centre at

1-800-565-3000 can respond to any enquiries you have about Parkinson's. We also have a quarterly magazine, **Parkinson Post**, to help you manage your Parkinson's.

Ask for printed information on other topics such as medication and potential side effects, constipation, sleep problems, speech and communication difficulties and mobility issues. You can also visit the Society's website at www.parkinson.ca to download the information you require.

National Office

4211 Yonge Street, Suite 316 Toronto, ON M2P 2A9
Ph: (416) 227-9700
Fax: (416) 227-9600
Toll Free: (800) 565-3000
www.parkinson.ca

Please contact the Parkinson Society Canada regional partner in your area to ask about Parkinson's exercise classes that may be available near you.

Parkinson Society British Columbia

890 West Pender Street, Suite 600
Vancouver, BC V6C 1J9
Ph: (604) 662-3240
Toll Free (BC only): (800) 668-3330
Fax: (604) 687-1327
www.parkinson.bc.ca

Victoria Epilepsy and Parkinson's Centre Society

813 Darwin Avenue
Victoria, BC V8X 2X7
Ph: (250) 475-6677
Fax: (250) 475-6619
www.vepc.bc.ca

The Parkinson's Society of Alberta

Edmonton General, Room 3Y18
11111 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 0L4
Ph: (780) 482-8993
Toll Free: (888) 873-9801
Fax: (780) 482-8969

The Parkinson's Society of Southern Alberta

480D 36th Avenue SE
Calgary, AB T2G 1W4
Ph: (403) 243-9901
Toll Free (Alberta): (800) 561-1911
Fax: (403) 243-8283
www.parkinsons-society.org

Saskatchewan Parkinson's Disease Foundation

3502 Taylor Street East, Suite 108B
Saskatoon, SK S7H 5H9
Ph: (306) 477-4242
Fax: (306) 477-4243

Parkinson Society Manitoba

171 Donald Street, Suite 302
Winnipeg, MB R3C 1M4
Ph: (204) 786-2637
Toll Free: (866) 999-5558
Fax: (204) 786-2327

PSC Central & Northern Ontario Region

4211 Yonge Street, Suite 316
Toronto, ON M2P 2A9
Ph: (416) 227-9700
Toll Free (National): (800) 565-3000
Fax: (416) 227-9600

PSC Southwestern Ontario Region

4500 Blakie Road, Unit #117
London, ON N6L 1G5
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Toll Free (Ontario): (888) 851-7376
Fax: (519) 652-9267
www3.sympatico.ca/pf.swo

Parkinson Society Ottawa

1053 Carling Avenue
Ottawa, ON K1Y 4E9
Ph: (613) 722-9238
Fax: (613) 722-3241
www.parkinsons.ca

Parkinson Society Quebec

1253 McGill College, Suite 402
Montreal, QC H3B 2Y5
Ph: (514) 861-4422
Toll Free: (National Francophone Line):
(800) 720-1307
Fax: (514) 861-4510
www.infoparkinson.org

PSC Maritime Region

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Toll Free (NS, NB & PEI):
(800) 663-2468
Fax: (902) 422-3797
www.parkinsonsocietymaritimes.ca

Parkinson Society Newfoundland & Labrador

The Ashley Building
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