

Try one of these activities found to help maintain balance and walking in Parkinson's Disease:

- Dancing
- Pilates
- Yoga
- Agility training
- Tai Chi
- Boxing training

Add in a cardiovascular exercise:

- Walking
- Jogging
- Cycling (Road or Stationery)
- Swimming
- Water aerobics

Tips when starting an exercise program:

- Start slowly and build up. If you don't exercise much now, start 5-10 minutes a day three days a week.
- If possible, schedule workout times and stick to it. Working out with a friend or in a group helps with accountability.
- Choose something you enjoy doing.
- Join an exercise class and/or work with an athletic trainer
- Keep other physical issues in mind – modify activities if needed
- Build in rewards for yourself for sticking with your schedule

Sources for more information



Parkinson's disease and fall prevention

Falls Prevention

<https://www.parkinson.org/library/factsheets/falls-prevention>

Impact of Falls and Parkinson's Disease – My Parkinson's Story

A PADRECC produced YouTube video on how falls affect people with PD and ways to prevent them

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LW13PLLJKfE>

Resources to Prevent Falls

Parkinson's Foundation: Fitness Counts Book

<https://www.parkinson.org/sites/default/files/documents/fitness-counts-april2023.pdf>

CDC Fall Prevention Resources

<https://www.cdc.gov/falls/index.html>

Brian Grant Foundation Exercise videos

<https://briangrant.org/exercisevideos/>

Parkinson's Disease Research Education and Clinical Centers (PADRECC)

www.parkinsons.va.gov

1-800-949-1001x205769

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Parkinson's Disease Research Education & Clinical Centers

Fall Prevention



PARKINSON'S DISEASE

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Parkinson's Disease Research,
Education & Clinical Centers

Medical Support

- When falls occur in people with PD, they create lots of problems. Fall prevention ideally starts before falls occur. Here are some things your healthcare team provide to help you prevent falls:
- **Your doctor (neurologist or PCP):**
 - Fine tune your PD medications to improve your 'on' time
 - Look for medication interactions that can make you groggy or dizzy (pharmacists also help here)
 - Check blood pressure sitting and standing periodically
 - Screen for causes of neuropathy (peripheral nerve dysfunction) like Vitamin B12 level, thyroid function, and diabetes
 - Check Vitamin D level as balance might be affected by low levels and Vit D is important in maintain bone strength
- **Your physical and occupational therapist:**
 - Help you create an exercise regimen to improve balance, improve posture and maintain overall strength
 - Assess for need of an assistive device like a cane or walker and train you in the proper use of assistive devices.
- **Your Optometrist:**
 - Checks your vision at least once a year. Avoid the use of bifocals or trifocals while walking. A separate pair of glasses for distance vision can be used at that time.

Household Safety Tips

- **Hallways / Walking areas**
 - Avoid clutter - throw rugs, decorative items, furniture, etc.
 - Avoid electric or telephone cords.
 - Install non-skid surfaces for walkways.
 - Install handrails on both sides of stairways / on wall of long hallways.
 - Install light switches at both the top and bottom of stairways.
 - Mark edges of steps for easy visibility.
 - Keep areas well lit
- **Kitchen**
 - Keep frequently used items stored at waist level.
 - Consider a rolling cart to carry items from counter to table
- **Bathrooms**
 - Install grab bars and non-skid tub mats or adhesive strips.
 - Consider a bath bench in the bathtub or shower.
- **Bedrooms**
 - Lamps and light switches should be easily accessible from chair or bed.
 - Adjust height of bed so it is easy to stand up.
 - Use night lights.
 - Consider using a motion-sensor under nightstand to automatically turn on lamps if you get up at night
 - Consider a bedside commode or a urinal to decrease trips to bathroom.

Helpful Everyday Tips

- Try to take your medications on time
 - Take Carbidopa / Levodopa 30 min before or 60 min after a high protein meal if possible, to maximize absorption
- Drink water liberally to avoid becoming dehydrated
- Change positions slowly from lying to sitting or sitting to standing especially if you are feeling lightheaded
- When you are standing, try to keep your feet approximately shoulder width apart to maintain balance
- Regular stretching exercises keep you limber, regular resistance exercises increase your strength, and agility maintains balance
- Join a class which helps build core strengthening and require balance function including Therapeutic Qi Gong, Tai Chi, Pilates and yoga to improve balance
- Try to avoid carrying objects using both hands so one hand remains free
- Use your prescribed walking aids regularly – even if you are only going across the room
- If you are using a walker, always have both hands on the walker if possible.
- Wear appropriately fitting shoes with non-skid soles.
- A separate pair of glasses for distance vision can be used at that time.