

## Types of Exercise

- **Aerobic**: involves the cardio respiratory system and should be done continuously for at least 10 minutes at a time.

*Examples: walking, jogging, bicycle riding (stationary or outside), swimming, water aerobics, dancing, tennis, golf (without a cart), raking leaves, pushing a lawn mower*

- **Flexibility or stretching**: helps with range of motion and posture, combats rigidity, releases muscle tension, improves circulation and balance.

*Examples: simple arm and leg stretches, head tilts and neck turns, trunk twists, tai chi, yoga*

- **Muscle strengthening & core**: involves external resistance against muscles.

*Examples: lifting weights with dumbbells or free weights, using resistance bands, Pilates, using weight machines*

- **Passive**: for people having a hard time moving by their self. Therapists or family members move arms and legs for them.

*Example: range of motion exercises*

## Safety and Awareness Tips

- Heart or lung problem? Consult with your doctor before beginning.
- Perform exercises in a chair if you are at risk for falling or freezing.
- Exercise when your PD meds are at their peak and you are “on.”
- If you experience sudden drops in blood pressure (orthostatic hypotension), remember to move slowly between lying, sitting and standing movements.
- Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of fluids.
- Exercise should not give you pain.

.....  
Make a lifelong commitment to exercise.  
Develop a daily routine and stay active.

### **Exercise is Medicine for PD**

#### **Q. Recently diagnosed with PD?**

**A.** Discuss your current activity level with your doctor. Ask for a baseline consult to physical therapy (PT) or kinesiotherapy (KT). Explore PD specific exercise options near your home.

#### **Q. Already active? What else can I do?**

**A.** Ask your doctor how you can exercise at higher intensity levels.

#### **Q. Diagnosed with PD for years, but not exercising?**

**A.** It is never too late to start. Consult a rehabilitation doctor or PT or KT to help you take the first step.

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

[www.parkinsons.va.gov](http://www.parkinsons.va.gov)

**1-800-949-1001x5769**

Revised 5/2017

# Exercise & Physical Activity



## PARKINSON'S DISEASE

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## **Parkinson's disease:**

- Is a slowly progressive neurologic disease affecting a person's ability to move.
- There is no cure.
- Medications are the cornerstone of therapy for symptomatic treatment of PD
- Currently, there are no drugs that slow disease progression.

**Anti-parkinson drugs are not enough!**

**Treatment must include exercise and regular physical activity!**

## **Benefits of Exercise:**

- Improves mood
- Improves flexibility & mobility
- Improves muscle & joint stiffness
- Keeps muscles strong
- Increase energy level
- Promotes good posture
- Relieves constipation
- Helps improve balance
- Improves cardiac & respiratory function
- Decreases rate of bone loss

Research continues to study the benefits of exercise in both animal & human models. Strong evidence is emerging that exercise for people with PD:

- Repairs the brain
- Relieves motor symptoms
- Keeps you independent longer
- Provides benefits for the road ahead

## **Exercise may help these symptoms:**

- slowness
- stiffness or rigidity
- gait
- balance problems
- tremor
- constipation
- depression

## **Ideas and Tips for Exercise:**

- Popular Parkinson community suggestions include: walking, water exercises, bicycling, dancing, tai chi, yoga, boxing, Nintendo Wii or Microsoft Kinect Xbox games.
- Pick something fun. What activities did you enjoy as a youth?
- Try several things until you find something you like to do regularly.
- Pair with music to stay motivated and keep the intensity up.
- Go for a walk each day. Wear a pedometer and count your steps.
- Find out what is available in your community. Inquire at your hospital, clinic, support group, local gym, YMCA, dance studio, or parks & recreation department.
- Ask for a referral to a Rehabilitation doctor, Physical therapist, Occupational therapist, or Kinesiotherapist.

## **Parkinson's Exercise Resources**

- **APDA (American Parkinson Disease Association)** [www.apdaparkinson.org](http://www.apdaparkinson.org)
- **Brian Grant Foundation** [www.briangrant.org](http://www.briangrant.org)
- **Dance for PD®** [www.danceforparkinsons.org](http://www.danceforparkinsons.org)
- **Davis Phinney Foundation** [www.davisphinneyfoundation.org](http://www.davisphinneyfoundation.org)
- **Delay the Disease™** [www.delaythedisease.com](http://www.delaythedisease.com)
- **Exercise Helpline 888-606-1688**  
Neuro Rehabilitation Center at Boston
- **LSVT® Global - BIG & LOUD therapies** [www.lsvtglobal.com](http://www.lsvtglobal.com)
- **Michael J Fox Foundation** [www.michaeljfox.org](http://www.michaeljfox.org)
- **NPF (National Parkinson Foundation)** [www.parkinson.org](http://www.parkinson.org)
- **PDF (Parkinson Disease Foundation)** [www.pdf.org](http://www.pdf.org)
- **PD & The Art of Moving** [www.parkinsonsexercise.com](http://www.parkinsonsexercise.com)
- **PWR!® (Parkinson Wellness Recovery)** [www.pwrgym.org](http://www.pwrgym.org)
- **Rock Steady Boxing** [www.rocksteadyboxing.org](http://www.rocksteadyboxing.org)
- **Yoga for Movement Disorders** [www.limyoga.com](http://www.limyoga.com)