

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, improve 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.

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

It is never too late to start.

If you:

- have been **recently diagnosed** with Parkinson’s disease (PD): talk to your doctor about starting an exercise program.
- are **active already**: ask how to improve your level of fitness.
- have been **diagnosed with PD for a while & not exercising**: consult a rehab doctor or physical therapist to help you take the first step.

Exercise is therapy for PD

Parkinson’s Disease Research Education
and Clinical Centers (PADRECC)
www.parkinsons.va.gov

Exercise & Physical Activity



PARKINSON'S
DISEASE



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Why is exercise important in PD? If you don't use it - you will lose it

PD is a slowly progressive neurologic disease affecting a person's ability to move. Medications such as Sinemet or carbidopa/levodopa are the cornerstone of therapy and treat motor symptoms. There is no cure for PD. No drugs currently exist that slow the progression.

**Anti-parkinson drugs are not enough
But exercise and regular physical activity
may keep you independent longer and
give you benefits down the road.**

Many research trials are being conducted on the benefits of exercise and testing a variety of exercises in both animal models & persons with PD. There is hope that exercise can help reverse motor symptoms & repair the brain.

Benefits of Exercise

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

Exercise will help these symptoms:

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

Ideas for exercise:

- Popular Parkinson community suggestions include: walking, water exercises, bicycling, dancing, tai chi, yoga, boxing, and Nintendo Wii 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 specific programs

Special training is available for fitness & dance professionals and therapists to work effectively with people with PD.

To locate a class or trained professional:

- **Dance for PD®**
www.danceforparkinsons.org
- **LSVT® Global - BIG (physical therapy) & LOUD (speech therapy)**
www.lsvtglobal.com
- **Parkinson Wellness Recovery (PWR!) Moves by NeuroFit NetWorks**
www.pwrgym.org
- **Delay the Disease, Exercise & PD**
www.delaythedisease.com
- **PD & The Art of Moving**
www.parkinsonsexercise.com

More Exercise Resources

- **American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA)**
www.apdaparkinson.org
- **National Parkinson Foundation (NPF)**
www.parkinson.org
- **Parkinson Disease Foundation (PDF)**
www.pdf.org
- **Davis Phinney Foundation**
www.davisphinneyfoundation.org
- **PD Plan 4 Life** www.pdplan4life.com
- **Exercise Helpline: 888-606-1688** Neuro Rehab Center at Boston University with APDA support