

EXERCISING

WITH

PARKINSON'S DISEASE



A safe and effective exercise program can reduce the symptoms of Parkinson's disease by increasing muscle strength and endurance, enhancing mobility and reducing your risk of falling. Regular physical activity can also help improve your balance and coordination, and enhance your overall quality of life. The key is to determine what type of exercise is best for you, and to follow a program that accommodates your individual needs and concerns.

Getting Started

- Talk with your health care provider before starting an exercise program and ask for specific programming recommendations.
- Take all medications as recommended by your physician.
- The goals of your program should be to improve your functional capacity and ability to perform activities of daily living, increase muscle strength and endurance, improve range of motion, and reduce your risk of injury.
- Choose activities that you enjoy and will do regularly. If walking is too difficult, cycling, swimming and chair activities are good alternatives. Group classes can also provide a social element to your workouts.
- If your fitness level is low, start with shorter sessions (10 to 15 minutes) and gradually build up to 30 minutes, five days per week.
- Perform low-level strength-training exercises using light weights. Incorporate flexibility, eye-hand coordination, reflex training, and fall prevention activities.
- Take frequent breaks during activity if needed. Your workouts should be comfortable and not strained.

Exercise Cautions

- If fatigue is an issue, try exercising first thing in the morning.
- If you are at risk of falling or freezing (becoming rigid), hold on to a chair when performing standing exercises or do chair-based exercises instead.
- Avoid exercising alone and don't hesitate to ask for demonstrations or further explanations about how to perform exercises properly.

Your exercise program should be designed to maximize the benefits with the fewest risks of aggravating your health or physical condition. Consider contacting a certified health and fitness professional* who can work with you and your health care provider to establish realistic goals and design a safe and effective program that addresses your specific needs.

*If your health care provider has not cleared you for independent physical activity and would like you to be monitored in a hospital setting or a medical fitness facility, you should exercise only under the supervision of a certified professional. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) has two groups of certified fitness professionals that could meet your needs. The ACSM Certified Clinical Exercise Specialist (CES) is certified to support those with heart disease, diabetes and lung disease. The ACSM Registered Clinical Exercise Physiologist (RCEP) is qualified to support patients with a wide range of health challenges. You may locate all ACSM-certified fitness professionals by using the ProFinder at www.acsm.org.

For more information, visit www.exerciseismedicine.org or e-mail eim@acsm.org.

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