

## Value of Exercise and Parkinson's Disease



Parkinson's disease is primarily a disease of older persons but is becoming more prevalent as people are living longer. It is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that results when cells in a small part of the brain, the substantia nigra, begin to die. These cells produce dopamine, a neurotransmitter that relays messages to the area of the brain responsible for movement and balance. There is currently no cure for Parkinson's.

### The four cardinal signs of Parkinson's disease are:

- 1) **Resting Tremor:** This affects approximately 75% of persons with Parkinson's disease. It is usually rhythmic and begins on one side of the body and eventually spreads to the other side. Tremors usually disappear briefly during movement and do not occur during sleep.
- 2) **Muscle Rigidity (Akinesia):** This affects almost all persons with Parkinson's disease and is often described as "stiffness" or "hardness" of the muscles.
- 3) **Slowness of Movement (Bradykinesia):** This occurs in almost all persons with Parkinson's disease. After a number of years, muscles may "freeze" usually when making

turns or passing through narrow spaces, such as doorways.

- 4) **Postural Instability:** Lack of balance is caused by changes in body alignment, loss of postural alignment, loss of postural reflexes and akinesia.

There are many secondary symptoms of Parkinson's disease and individuals tend to be unique in their presentation of symptoms.

While people with Parkinson's disease are primarily treated with medication, exercise is one of the most important things a person can do to help maintain mobility and improve quality of life. Exercise will help slow the progression of symptoms, making the disease less disabling. It will help



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to improve balance, help to overcome gait problems, strengthen muscles and improve coordination and flexibility.

The pool is a great place for persons with Parkinson's disease to exercise. Buoyancy reduces the impact on joints and cushions movements, thus reducing the risk of injury and decreasing pain. Since muscles are rigid and movements tend to be slow, the warmth of the water is soothing and the pressure of the water around the body has a massaging effect on muscles. Fear of falling when walking is common: water surrounding the body provides support and lessens that fear.

An aquatic exercise program should include four major areas: relaxation, postural maintenance, respiratory capacity and range of motion.

Muscle rigidity which is common with Parkinson's disease makes it difficult for individuals to relax. Relaxation exercises such as deep breathing and stretching are beneficial. Muscle rigidity also causes the forward-leaning posture often seen in persons with Parkinson's disease. This posture can result in increased neck, back and joint pain, poor balance, and difficulty walking. These increase the individual's chance of falling. Exercises for strengthening core muscles, strengthening and stretching of leg muscles, shoulder strengthening exercises, and various walking exercises can help to correct and maintain proper postural alignment and reduce the possibility of falling.

Muscle rigidity and the flexed position of the person with Parkinson's disease inhibit the muscle of the diaphragm from expanding, leading to breathing difficulties. To increase the flexibility of respiratory muscles, exercise should include deep breathing, trunk rotation, pectoral stretching and back extension.



Parkinson's disease damages muscles and joints, contributing to joint adhesions and muscle atrophy. This can add to pain and immobility. When a person finds a joint or muscle painful, he/she will limit movement and thus the problem is exacerbated. Exercises

to develop and maintain a range of motion are essential for individuals with Parkinson's disease.

In addition to the physical problems inherent in Parkinson's disease, depression and social isolation are often experienced. Participation in an organized group program in a comfortable and safe environment promotes social interaction with others that share the same experiences. A bond quickly forms between individuals and continued involvement in the exercise program becomes eagerly anticipated. In addition to improving physical capabilities, emotional state and sense of well-being are enhanced through exercise.

Exercise will not cure or stop the progression of Parkinson's disease but it can help slow the progression and also helps the individual to better be able to lead an active independent life for an extended period of time.

# How to Make Your Home Safe



Home safety should be a priority for everyone with a disease, disability or even the normal aging process. There will never be a better time to do a room-by-room safety check and make the necessary changes to make your home as safe and comfortable as possible.

## FIRE SAFETY & PRECAUTIONS

- **Smoke Detectors** should be strategically installed throughout your home. Kitchen area for sure. Remember to check the batteries at least twice a year.
- **Carbon Monoxide Detector** may be appropriate as well. Ask your local fire department if you should have one in your home.
- **Escape Plan** in the event of a fire should be discussed and practiced with all family members. Predetermine the fastest and easiest way to exit your home.
- **Oxygen Hazards** need to be reviewed and adhered to for those using oxygen in the home. Smoking near an oxygen source is the biggest danger. Please review additional precautions with your oxygen provider.

**ELECTRICAL SAFETY** – If you are using electrical medical equipment, please take time to read the electrical safety section in the instruction manual.

- Plug all medical equipment into a properly grounded electrical outlet. When using a three-prong adapter, make sure it is properly installed.
- Do not use cheap extension cords. Use only quality outlet “extenders” or “power strips” with internal circuit breakers.

**BATHROOM SAFETY** – Because of smooth slippery surfaces the bathroom can be very dangerous especially for those who are unsteady on their feet.

- Avoid loose throw rugs. Use only non-slip rugs to prevent slipping on wet floors.
- Install grab bars on shower walls and use non-slip footing strips or a rubber suction mat in your shower or tub.
- Use a shower chair or bench so you can sit safely rather than standing to shower.
- Utilize a raised toilet seat with arm supports for ease of getting on & off the commode.
- If you have trouble sensing hot and cold, lower the temperature of your water heater to avoid accidental scalding.

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**BEDROOM SAFETY** – Make a safe, uncluttered and comfortable bedroom.

- **Hospital Bed** – These beds raise and lower the head and foot of the bed so you can sit up, recline and adjust your knees for added comfort. Raising or lowering the entire bed makes bed baths easier and transfer from bed to chair less taxing. A variety of tables and supports are available so you can eat, exercise and read in bed.
- **Bed Rails** – Reduce your risk of falling out of bed when you roll from side to side.
- **Bedside Commode** – If you have difficulty walking, a bedside commode eliminates the need to walk to the bathroom during the night.
- **Night Lights** – Install night lights to help orient yourself and help find your way in the dark.
- **IV Pole** – If using an IV pole, make sure that all furniture, loose carpets and electrical cords are out of the way to avoid falling when walking around your home.

**KITCHEN SAFETY** – Your kitchen should be conveniently set up so you can easily reach common items that you use throughout the day.

- Place small appliances and utensils on the counter where you can easily reach them.
- Keep a stool near the kitchen counter work area if you tire easily while standing.

- Be careful lifting pots & pans as they may be not only hot but heavy. Use padded mitts to firmly grasp pots and pans on both sides to avoid burns.
- Utilize convenient gadgets if need be.
  - o Electric Can Opener
  - o Bottle & Jar Openers
  - o Large Handled Utensils
- When working at your stove be careful that IV tubing or oxygen tubing does not hang over the heat as they can be flammable.

**ADDITIONAL HOME SAFETY** – If you are using assistive devices for walking around your home, here are some key points.

- Install temporary or permanent guardrails on stairs to give you additional support.
- If you are using a walker, make sure that furniture and walkways are arranged to give you enough free space to get around.
- If you are using a walker or wheelchair, you may need a ramp for getting in and out of your home. Ramps can be purchased ready-made or custom-built for you.

There's no place like home so make every effort to make your home safe, convenient and comfortable for you and your family. Hope these easy and effective tips are helpful to you. Stay safe!



## SPRINGTIME WORDSEARCH

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# *Parkinson Place Center Testimonial*

Parkinson's can take the wind out of your sails pretty quickly. It's a journey, but it's not a journey you go by yourself. That's very important to know. It's a journey you're going to share. Like when you walk on the bus and a kid gets up for you. You're 40 years old and they're getting up for you because you can't stand up straight. Do you know what I mean? That affects him too. It affects your friends and your family. It affects everything that happens to you.

What happened was I'm diagnosed and one night I said, "Honey, I don't feel good." My wife leaned over and said, "Blame it on the Parkinson's." She said it as a joke, but then she took me to the hospital.

I coded on the table. It got very warm but I wasn't afraid. All of a sudden, I came back. My heart had stopped getting the electrical impulses from my brain.

My family has lots of people with Parkinson's. There's me and two of my brothers, my cousin and her father. I was 42 years old when I got diagnosed. It was devastating but we chose to take the high road. The first thing after the diagnosis I said, "We got to try to raise money for the fight against Parkinson's." There was a walk in New York City. We raised between \$80,000 and \$90,000 over the years that we did it.

My wife was looking on the internet researching Parkinson's and found the Parkinson Place, in Sarasota, Florida. We moved to Florida because of it. It's a very positive place. You see these people who can't move yet still smile. They're still trying. The one thing that Parkinson Place does...I don't know...they make you live well with the disease.

So, we just make the best of it and laugh. We do laugh.

***Craig B.***



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Parkinson Research Foundation

Make a Donation

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Education • Research • Service

**Parkinson Research Foundation**

The Parkinson Research Foundation (PRF) is a federally recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that funds Parkinson research, education, advocacy and free services living with Parkinson disease. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

**Visit**  
**[www.ParkinsonHope.org](http://www.ParkinsonHope.org)**  
**for the most recent news**  
**and information**

Your premier source for news,  
information and resources for  
Parkinson's disease on the web.

# "Help Us Help Others - Donate Today"

Without ongoing contributions from generous donors like you, the **PARKINSON RESEARCH FOUNDATION** would be unable to fund **EDUCATION, RESEARCH, and FREE SERVICES** for the millions of people living with Parkinson's disease around the world.

## HOW TO GIVE

### Phone, Mail or Online

Phone: Please call (941) 893-4389 today to speak to one of our Donor Services Representatives.

Mail: Send your check or money order today payable to:  
PARKINSON RESEARCH FOUNDATION  
5969 Cattleridge Boulevard, Suite 100  
Sarasota, FL 34232

Online: Please visit [www.ParkinsonHope.org](http://www.ParkinsonHope.org) today and click on the Donate tab.

### Stocks, Securities, Mutual Funds and IRAs

Please give serious consideration to the donation of stock and mutual fund shares as this offers numerous opportunities to make a most gracious gift and receive tax advantages.

#### Stock Transfer Information:

Investment Brokerage: Fidelity Investments  
Phone: 800-544-6666  
DTC #: 0226  
Account Name: Parkinson Research Foundation, Inc.  
Account #: Z50054607

### Wills, Bequests and Planned Gifts

Please give serious consideration to the designation of PRF in your Will, Charitable Trusts, Life Insurance, Appreciated Securities and Real Estate as this offers preplanned giving opportunities that will serve the Parkinson community for years to come. Please call Lynne Henry (941) 893-4389 at the Parkinson Research Foundation, today, for personal assistance in initiating this effort.

The following language has been reviewed and is deemed a legally acceptable form for including such a bequest in a will:

"I give and bequeath to the Parkinson Research Foundation,  
5969 Cattleridge Boulevard, Suite 100, Sarasota, FL 34232  
for discretionary use in carrying out its aims and purposes,  
(the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_) OR (a sum equal to \_\_\_\_\_% of the value of my gross  
estate at the time of my death under this will or any codicil hereto)."

The Parkinson Research Foundation Federal ID number is 20-0205035

### Memorial and Honor Giving

Honor a family member, friend or special event by donating to PRF. Pay tribute to someone you love whose life has been impacted by Parkinson's disease. In lieu of flowers, please consider designating Parkinson Research Foundation as your charity of choice.

### Workplace Giving: Launch a Giving Campaign

Please consider leading a team at work by encouraging your colleagues and staff to join together to help those living with Parkinson disease. Launch a workplace giving campaign today.

### Ask about Matching Gifts

Many gracious employers double even triple charitable donations made by individual employees. Some companies will match gifts made by retirees and/or their spouses. Contact your employees for matching gift eligibility as this allows you to maximize your personal donation.