

Importance of Exercise for People with Parkinson's

“Physical activity has been shown to improve many Parkinson's Disease symptoms, from balance and mobility issues to depression, constipation, and even thinking skills. In addition, research shows that exercise may have a protective effect on the brain, slowing the degeneration of brain cells.” - Parkinson's Foundation

Positive Impacts of Exercise:

- any level of physical activity can improve motor symptoms
- exercise can be used to target specific PD symptoms
- aerobic exercise can improve executive functioning in people of all ages but specifically in people over the age of 60
- earlier exercise is linked to a slower decline in quality of life in people with Parkinson's
- participating in exercise classes provides community for and social interaction
- builds confidence in one's ability to move around their environment and improves overall safety
- learning new forms of exercise has positive cognitive benefits
- making daily tasks easier to complete
- improving overall mood

Exercise has been shown to improve the following:

- Gait, balance, and motor control
- Flexibility and posture
- Core strength
- Arm and leg strength
- Endurance
- Memory
- Decision making

Exercise has been shown to reduce:

- the number of falls someone has
- freezing of gait
- symptoms of depression and anxiety

What Types of Exercise are the Most Beneficial?

Exercise that is the most helpful in managing Parkinson's symptoms should include a strengthening component, an aerobic component, and a stretching component. The following forms of exercises are recommended:

- Running and walking
- Biking
- Tai chi
- Yoga
- Pilates
- Dance
- Light weight training
- Boxing using a bag