

Parkinson's Disease: how to stay safe when active



Aerobic, resistance, balance, and flexibility physical activities are important for those who have Parkinson's Disease.

- **Aerobic activities** make you breathe a little harder and begin to sweat. Aim for 150 minutes of aerobic activities each week, such as brisk walking or cycling.
- **Resistance activities** make you use your muscles to push, pull or lift. Try to do resistance activities 2 to 3 times a week.
- **Balance activities** help to keep you on your feet and reduce your risk of falling. Balance activities should be done most days in a week.
- **Flexibility activities** lengthen and stretch muscles that are tight or restrained. They can help prevent injuries and muscle and joint pain throughout the body. Flexibility activities should be done most days in a week.

Medications and your safety

Check with your healthcare provider before starting any physical activity program to ensure it is safe for you.

- Some medications may raise or lower your heart rate and blood pressure when you are at rest or when exercising. Be sure to discuss your medications with your doctor before starting your physical activity program.
- Take your Parkinson's medication on time for maximum mobility.
- To get the most benefit, people with Parkinson's disease should exercise when they are at their best in their medication cycles or in an "on" state.
- Start your exercise about 45–60 minutes after you have taken your medication.

This handout for adults gives you information to help you stay safe when you are active.

Topics include:

- medication, and
- general safety tips for physical activity.

- Regularly check your heart rate and blood pressure during exercise. Also watch for symptoms such as dizziness, giddiness, nausea, pain, or excessive sweating.
- Some medications may lower your blood pressure particularly when changing positions, for example, from lying to standing. Be sure to change positions slowly to avoid dizziness, falling, or fainting.
- It may take some time for you to notice the benefits of exercising. Don't be discouraged! The benefits may depend on consistently exercising at the same period of time after taking your medication.
- Be extra careful when exercising after a change in medication type or amount since it may affect you differently.

Other safety tips with Parkinson's Disease

- Balance, flexibility, and range of motion training are important for people with Parkinson's Disease.
- Starting exercise as early as possible can limit the degree of disability and reduce Parkinson's Disease symptoms.
- If you have advanced Parkinson's Disease, use a recumbent (reclining with back support) bike, a stationary bike, or an arm ergometer as a safer option for aerobic training.
- Monitor fatigue both during and after activities. At the end, you should feel tired, but not exhausted.

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General Safety Tips

Here are some general safety tips to keep in mind when you are active.

- Always warm-up and cool-down.
- Listen to your body and take breaks as needed.
- Drink water before, during and after physical activity.
- Choose activities that are safe for you to do.
- Start at an intensity level that you are comfortable with.
- Exercise in a way that is safe for you, for example, with balance exercises, you may need a stable support nearby; or when using a cycle ergometer or treadmill, you may need a safety harness.
- Join an exercise class. One of the best ways to stay motivated is to exercise with others. Contact your regional Parkinson Society for programs that may be available in your community.
- Wear your medical alert/ID bracelet.

Remember:

Physical activity can help you manage your Parkinson's Disease symptoms and help you improve in your daily activities.

But make sure you stay safe and have fun when being physically active.

One of the best ways to stay motivated is to exercise with others.



Topics in this toolkit:

- A. Taking the first step: deciding to be physically active
- B. Making a physical activity plan
- C. Setting goals for physical activity
- D. What stops you from being physically active?
- E. Benefits of physical activity
- F. Physical activity and your blood pressure
- G. High blood pressure safety
- H. Physical activity and Type 2 diabetes
- I. Diabetes safety
- J. Healthy weight and physical activity
- K. Physical activity and anxiety
- L. Anxiety safety
- M. Physical activity and chronic heart failure
- N. Chronic heart failure safety
- O. Physical activity and stroke
- P. Stroke safety
- Q. Physical activity and Parkinson's Disease
- R. Parkinson's Disease safety
- S. Physical activity and dementia
- T. Dementia safety

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