

SPECTRUM HEALTH



Physical Therapy and Every Day Life with Parkinson's Disease

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Useful Assistive Devices

“Better Living through gadgets”

might become your watch words..., but better than

“Pride goeth before the fall.”

Quote from: *A Patient-Expert Walks You Through Everything
You Need to Learn and Do*

The First Year, Parkinson’s Disease, page 146.

Resisting aids Can lead to debilitating falls and broken bones.

Devices recommended by Physical or Occupational Therapist's

Cane

Walker

Ramp

Tub-transfer bench

Grab bars

Select Mobility Activities affected by PD

Walking

In home or community

Flat surfaces or uneven surfaces

Transfers

Lying <> sit <> stand

Varied heights and surfaces

Bed Mobility

In/out of bed

Rolling/ scooting

Walking

Mobility Devices- Help retain mobility and independence

Speed- assist with increasing or decreasing to improve safety

Surfaces- require different devices or techniques

Obstacles- present increased challenges

Consult your doctor for a referral to PT for Device recommendations.

Freezing- All or part of your body is unable to move
Occurs frequently walking through doorways or turning around

Strategies for dealing with Freezing:

Door-imagine a line and step over the line or focus on a point past the doorway

March in place-exaggerating height of marching

Stop and say start out loud

Count your steps

Physical cue (tap on shoulder) or verbal cue from someone

Walker designed for persons with PD

Service dog

Transfers

Lying <> Sitting

Bed

Sofa

Sitting <> Standing

Chair- varied heights/firmness

Floor

Bed- height/firmness

Car

Bed/Sofa Mobility

Into Bed:

Back up to the side of the bed using your assistive device

Sit down on the bed

Lye onto one side lifting legs in one swift motion

Roll onto back

Out of Bed:

Roll onto side

Push from side using arms/swinging legs off bed simultaneously

Bed/Sofa Mobility Continued

Rolling:

Bend knee opposite the side you are rolling toward

Place arm opposite the side you are rolling toward out to side

Swing arm and knee across body simultaneously to roll

Scooting:

Bend both knees and place feet on bed

Lift bottom high off the bed

Shift hips to side you intend to scoot

Lift shoulders pressing elbows into bed, scoot shoulders to side

Sit to Stand:

Scoot forward to front edge of chair/bed

Lean forward at hips reaching toward floor with hands

Stand using legs

Touch arm of chair lightly for balance if needed

Stand to Sit:

Back up to chair/bed until you feel it on the back of your legs

Lean and reach forward, both arms/touch arm of chair if needed for safety/balance

Bend hips and knees keeping trunk forward, sit on chair

Car Transfer

Open car door

Turn so your back is facing the seat

Place one hand on the dash and the other on the frame or seat

Lean forward bending hips and knees

Lower bottom to seat

Scoot back on the seat toward the center console

Swing legs into the car turning body to face forward

Reclining the seat back slightly makes in/out of car less difficult

Safety during home projects

Take the time to realistically assess your abilities

Use caution when:

Using sharp knives or power tools- especially with tremors

Climbing ladders or walking on high surfaces without railings

Standing on furniture- ex: changing light bulb/hanging curtains

Stepping over objects left on the floor

Consider projects needed to improve safety now and future

Home Accessibility and Safety

Request a home safety evaluation before an injury occurs

Things to consider:

Stairs/railings/ramp

Levels in the home

Width of doors

Bathroom safety

Avoid clutter and narrow walking paths

Coping Tips

Wear cloths that do not require fasteners

Shoes that slip on, have Velcro closures or curly elastic laces

Use buttonhooks, zipper pulls, long handled shoe horn

Electric toothbrush

Long handled flossing device

Ergonomic utensils

Rubber jar openers/electric can opener

Weighted silverware/kitchen shears instead of knives

Travel mug with a lid

Coping Tips Continued

Bowl filled no more than ½ full/soup spoon

Scooped plate assists with spill prevention

Place items on the tray or seat of your walker to transport

Adapters for doorknobs, drawer pulls, lamp switches and keys

Reacher

Rubber gripper placed on pen or pencil

Carry mailing labels

Telephones and remote controls with large buttons

Safety and Support

Consider the location of your home

Do you have friends or family close by to assist

Is your garage easily accessible

Is it safe for you to walk to your mailbox

Consider a plow service including walkway clearing and salting

Is the lighting good/motion sensor lights or yard lights

Consider moving while you are able to pack and move boxes

Exercise and PD

Research indicates regular exercise and stretching can improve quality of life, potentially slow advancement of symptoms and improve mobility

Benefits of regular exercise and stretching:

Improve flexibility

Improve energy

Improve posture

A social activity

Can be a natural anti-depressant

Exercise Tips

Always check with your doctor before starting a new exercise program.

Pace yourself

Start slowly and build up your activity level and tolerance.

Exercise should not be painful

Avoid exercising during an “off time”, it can be dangerous

Stretch first thing in the morning

Stretch before and after exercise

Exercise Tips Continued

Exercise in an open space

Aerobic exercise recommended

- Increased heart rate and breathing

- Sustained-generally at least 20 minutes

- Strengthens your heart

Make exercise a priority- schedule it into your daily routine

Find an exercise you enjoy

Don't exercise immediately after eating or right before bed

Don't exercise in remote areas away from help

Traveling Considerations with PD

Be aware of driving risks:

Slowed reactions

Limitations in neck or trunk motion

Difficulty judging distance

Rigidity

Dyskinesia

Consider carrying a Medical Alert card that can be obtained from the National Parkinson's Foundation

Talk to your doctor about a handicapped tag or plate

Have your driving evaluated-don't risk hurting yourself or others

Travel Considerations Continued

Carry a list of meds with dosages

Contact information for your physicians

All of your medication, plus at least one full day's extra

Health insurance information

Comfortable walking shoes

Water bottle

Medication timer

Telescoping cane or walking stick

Medic-Alert bracelet- information must be kept current

Hotels- ask for handicapped-accessible room

When driving:

Make frequent stops to stretch

Large plastic bag in the glove box- assists with sliding on seats

Keep a couple extra doses of medication in your car

When renting choose a vehicle that is easy to get in/out

Air Travel:

Ask for Handicapped-accessible seating

Arrive early- board early

Gate check your walker

Use available airport transportation- pre-arrange

Job Accommodation Considerations

Need for accommodations will vary from person to person

Ergonomic workstation

Arm support

Writing and grip aids

Page turner and book holder

Close parking

Accessible entrance

Automatic door openers

Move workstation to a central location/close to restroom

Questions/Comments

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