



Total Fitness Training, Inc.

2803 Fruitville Rd, #125 • Sarasota, FL 34237

(941) 366-8500 • www.TotalFitnessTrainingInc.com

Tips For The Person With Parkinson's

Each of the following is a separate article. Articles are written using non-medical terminology.

1) Walk with more confidence and avoid the "freeze"

By Dennis K. Flood, M.S.

Sub-conscious vs. Conscious Motor Control

"Walking through the deep brown mud"

You must maintain the health and fitness of your heart and lungs. That is pretty important. When your cardiovascular (heart and lungs) system is healthy your risks for heart problems and strokes are much lower.

With a good understanding of how your conscious and subconscious nervous system works you will be able to walk more often and walk greater distances. Thus improving the over-all health of your heart and lungs.

Motor control is a term used to describe how your brain and nervous system "controls" the movements of your arms and legs. Sub-conscious motor control is pretty simple. We can walk across the room without even thinking about it. Our legs walk automatically. Without a giving it much thought you can walk across the room on "Automatic Pilot".

With Parkinson's your " Automatic Pilot " is not working at 100 %. To help and assist the Automatic Motor Control, you must use your **conscious** motor control. You must think about the activity of walk as - you - go.

As you walk across the room **count your steps out loud**, i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. While walking and counting you are using your **conscience** nervous system. By counting out loud you will be able to walk with a normal stride and take normal steps. Don't even think about " the freeze ". Just, count out-loud and walk ! Walk and count, walk and count ! At first you may feel a little silly counting out loud. But, isn't it more embarrassing to freeze and not be about to walk ! So, count out loud and walk!



Total Fitness Training, Inc.

2) Avoid being light headed when you stand up

By Dennis K. Flood, M.S.

Stomping the feet and moving the legs before standing will prevent you from becoming light headed when standing up after sitting for long time.

Have you ever felt a little light headed upon standing up after sitting for a while? Your foggy head could lead to a fall, a bump on the head, broken wrists or worse.

Moving your legs (kicking) or stomping your feet gets your leg muscles pumping blood up hill towards your heart and brain. Move your legs for just 5 seconds before standing. It's pretty simple. Your head will be clear by the time you get to your feet.

Moving your legs also sends a signal to your brain that you are getting ready to get up and walk.

While sitting for more than 20 minutes, such as at the movies, at dinner, the theater, oxygenated blood pools in your legs and drains out of your brain. There is lots of good blood and oxygen in your feet, but you need that blood and oxygen in your brain, not down in your legs and feet.

The big muscles in your legs act just like big pumps. The legs muscles pump and force the good oxygenated blood up hill to your heart, lungs and brain where it is needed.

An interesting note: Every muscle in your body has the extra responsibility of pumping blood back towards the heart and brain. That's true. Every muscle in your body pumps blood back towards the heart.

Special note: When all of your muscles are strong and toned they all do a better job of pumping blood around the body and back to the heart and brain. Stronger leg, back, stomach and arm muscles less ankle swelling because the leg muscles pump the blood up hill and the other muscles in the body keep the blood flowing around and around.

Your home work: Keep your muscles strong and stomp your feet before standing up.



Total Fitness Training, Inc.

3) Maintain Your Strength, Flexibility & Cardiovascular Endurance

by Dennis K. Flood, M.S.

Many who have Parkinson's feel because they have a disease they are not supposed to move. So they sit around the house all day and don't move. If you do have Parkinson's, do the opposite. Get moving!

By sitting and not walking or moving you lose the health and fitness of your heart and lungs and your brain. You also lose the flexibility of your legs, back, shoulder, and arms. In addition you lose muscle strength of all your muscles.

You get weaker and weaker, not from the Parkinson's, but from not moving. We call this deconditioning. So, walk and move and exercise as much as possible.

A note for family and care-partners: Keep your loved one moving. Encourage him or her to do as much self-care as possible. If he can put on his own shirt, encourage him. If he can cut up his own food, encourage him to. Small bites and small mouthfuls are best. Chew all food completely.

Keep active. Walking from room to room is a good start.

4) Prevent Drop-Foot & Keep The Calf Muscles Stretched Out & Flexible

By Dennis K. Flood, M.S.

Poor ankle flexibility and poor ankle (shin) strength are major causes of poor posture, small shuffling steps, poor balance and falls. Falls are more likely, especially towards the backwards direction when ankle flexibility is poor.

Shuffling: Most of the time the shuffling steps are caused by stiff ankles and weak shin muscles, not the Parkinson's disease itself.

Dorsiflexion is the term used when the front of the foot can flex up. You can watch someone else walk. Their back foot dorsiflexes (toes pulls up) allowing them to take a long stride.

Solution: Stretch the calf muscles several times a day, holding each stretch for 1 to 2 minutes. Watch the clock and really hold the stretch for 60 seconds or longer.

You can exercise the shin muscles. You are able to walk with much more confidence and take a better and safer stride when your shin muscles are strong and can automatically lift the front of your foot while you are walking.

Perform the dorsiflexion exercise every day several times. Sit in a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Keep your heels on the floor and raise up the front part of your foot. Do this lift (dorsiflexion) 20 times. Rest and repeat 20 more times.



Total Fitness Training, Inc.

Stooped Over Posture: When your ankles cannot flex forward, also called dorsiflexion, you have to lean your shoulders forward a little, so that you can maintain your balance. When your ankles can't flex forward (upward) you have a tendency to fall backwards. Keep your calf muscles stretched out and keep your shin muscles strong.

5) Maintain Good Posture and Good Balance

By Dennis K. Flood, M.S.

A. Practice lying flat on your back on a bed without a pillow.

B. Use the EZ Stretch Board 2 or 3 times each day. Hold the stretch for 1 or 2 minutes.

With improved ankle flexibility you will not have the tendency to lean forward at the waist or at the shoulders. We want to prevent this type of forward leaning posture.

C. Stretch your calf muscles in this manner several times a day, especially in the morning.

When your ankles are stiff and can't flex forward your shoulders will lean forward so you can maintain your balance. When your ankles are stiff, you feel like you are going to fall backwards.

When you stretch for 60 seconds or more each day, you will notice that your balance improves, your walking stride lengthens, your heart and lungs become healthier because you are walking more, and your posture will improve.

That's a lot of good things happening from just doing a simple stretch for 60 to 90 seconds!