

Falls in Parkinson's disease occur mostly when turning or changing directions and is often related to a "freezing episode." A freezing episode is defined as the inability to move the feet or other parts of the body when wanting to initiate movement. Not all people with Parkinson's disease experience freezing episodes but those who do are at a much higher risk of falling.



Facts about Falls Related to PD:

- Approximately 38% of people with PD fall each year.
- People with PD may require more time for rehabilitation as hospitalization usually affects their "normal routine" and renders a patient less mobile.
- Research shows that exercise is just as important as medication.

HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL TIPS FOR MINIMIZING YOUR RISK FOR FALLS:

1. Don't think you are immune to a fall or a balance problem.
2. Take an honest inventory of your abilities and limitations.
3. Don't get distracted: slow down and focus on what you are doing.
4. Plan complex movements carefully and don't hurry (e.g., *sit down to put on your pants*).
5. Take charge of your physical condition (*Nutrition, rest, exercise, mental activity*).
6. Reduce your environmental risks (*Indoors and outdoors*).
7. Consider adapting your surroundings for improved safety (*Grab bars, ramp*).
8. Consider utilizing an assistive device (*Cane, walker*).
9. Divide and conquer: split challenging tasks (e.g., *put down what you are carrying before sitting down*).
10. If doing something led to a fall before, do it differently next time!

NPF'S PD LIBRARY INCLUDES TWO VIDEOS ON THE TOPIC OF FALLS PREVENTION:

▶ "WHAT ARE SOME STRATEGIES TO PREVENT FALLS IN PD PATIENTS?"

Professor Bastiaan Bloem, from the Nijmegen Parkinson Center in the Netherlands, gives helpful tips in this four-minute video. He recommends using a team approach—working with a neurologist, a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist and a rehabilitation specialist—to prevent falls and by taking protective measures such as using hip and knee protectors, helmets and/or walking aids.

▶ "HOW CAN FALLS BE PREVENTED?"

John Nutt, MD, from the Oregon Health and Science University, explains the three major causes of falls in this six-minute video: changing positions, freezing and low blood pressure. He recommends that people with PD avoid multi-tasking when walking. Simple tasks like trying to talk to someone when walking may increase your risk of a fall.

You can also go online to www.parkinson.org/Library and print out helpful checklists:

"Balance Checklist"

"Mobility and Parkinson's: Simple Compensations to Enhance Movement"