

Approximately one third of those diagnosed with PD remain active in the workforce. Deciding if and when to share your diagnosis with your employer and coworkers, coupled with symptoms that make work tasks more challenging, can contribute to significant stress on the job. It is important to consider required job tasks, fatigue, and safety in the workplace.

Required job tasks:

- Consider all required tasks within your workday. If possible, schedule the most challenging tasks at the time of day you feel most rested and mobile.
- Make tasks easier by using technology. Investigate computer hardware/software adaptations if needed. Try a Dictaphone if your handwriting makes writing messages difficult or use a headset on the telephone to improve posture and mobility.
- Use a cart to transport items if carrying things becomes more difficult.
- Delegate or trade more challenging tasks to others when possible.

Coping with Fatigue:

- Schedule breaks as needed.
- Change position often, taking frequent stretch breaks.
- Intersperse sedentary tasks with more active ones.
- Explore job share or flex time options if available.

Safety on the Job:

- Use good body mechanics when lifting, carrying, bending and stooping.
- Seek an ergonomic assessment to make sure your desk or work station is designed to reduce unsafe or inefficient movements.
- Maximize the benefits of your medication. Use a pill timer to make certain you are on time with every dose.

Sharing your diagnosis at work:

Telling others you have Parkinson's is a personal decision. Consider your symptoms and stress levels related to your individual situation. Attempts to conceal a diagnosis can sometimes lead to misunderstanding among coworkers, or higher stress levels making PD symptoms worse. Every work setting is different. It is important that you feel comfortable with your choices.

Involving Your Team:

Under federal law, an employer is required to make reasonable accommodations to the job or job site to allow continued performance of job duties. Job site evaluation by an occupational therapist may help identify needed accommodations.