

We use our hands throughout the day in all activities. Active people with Parkinson's may notice changes in the ease in which they perform hand and finger motions. This change may be due to slow movement, tremor, feelings of stiffness, and/or loss of automatic movement patterns. This may lead to extra time and frustration when performing tasks. The following tips can enhance hand coordination:

- Focus on the task at hand—divided attention often makes doing even basic, routine tasks more difficult.
- Slow down. Rushing through tasks can make them more difficult to perform.
- Exercise hands and fingers regularly. Simple stretches or a hand exerciser keeps hands and fingers flexible. Playing musical instruments, cards, or board games may also help.
- Using a computer keyboard regularly helps keep hands and fingers working well. Explore adaptations for computer hardware/software if keyboarding is difficult.
- Gardening, knitting, and other hobbies provide fun and stimulating hand exercise.
- Using toothbrushes, hairbrushes, silverware, and writing tools with larger handles may help make tasks easier to perform.
- Stabilize arms or elbows by resting them on a table or against your body. This decreases effects of arm and hand tremor.
- Involve both hands in tasks to ensure continued use and flexibility. Avoid the tendency of favoring one hand over another to complete tasks.
- Take “mini-breaks” to rest if needed.
- Schedule tasks that require greater hand control for times when you are well rested and medications are working well.
- Stress can contribute to slowness, tremor, and/or stiffness. Avoid frustration by allowing extra time and adequate rest between activities.

Involving Your Team

Consult an occupational therapist for evaluation and recommendations to improve hand coordination. Exercises, compensation strategies, or adaptive tools may help with tasks you find difficult to perform.