

# Activities at Home



Advanced Parkinson's symptoms often decrease one's ability to participate in leisure activities and hobbies. Mood and thinking changes can also affect your loved one's interest in participating in the daily routine. The person with Parkinson's may feel fatigue or have a loss of motivation to try things he or she used to enjoy. It is important to encourage physical, mental and social activity whenever possible to maximize mobility and quality of life.

## Keeping Active: Movement and Exercise

Regular exercise helps people with Parkinson's retain flexibility, improve circulation and maintain their abilities to complete daily tasks. It is important to practice speech, too. If you do not have time to complete regular exercise and speech practice with the person with Parkinson's, enlist the help of another family member, friend or care provider.

- » **Work with a physical or occupational therapist** to design an appropriate exercise program.
- » **Work with a speech pathologist** to design an appropriate breathing and speech practice program.
- » **Encourage regular movements of arms and legs as part of the daily routine.** It may be necessary to split exercise into several short sessions, or to incorporate a few exercise activities during dressing or bathing tasks.
- » **Focus on maintaining large, exaggerated motions whenever possible.**
- » **Use small, inexpensive equipment** like balls or balloons during exercise activities to help stimulate movement.
- » **Have the person with Parkinson's stand or walk with assistance** whenever possible to maintain leg strength and strong, healthy bones.
- » **Engage the person with Parkinson's in daily activities that involve movement to music** (dancing, marching, singing, swaying, etc.).
- » **Give no more assistance than is needed with daily activities.** Let the person help with tasks, however small, that he or she can still do.
- » **Practice frequently used words or phrases**, focusing on maintaining loudness.

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## Keeping Active: Thinking and Memory

PD's impact on visual and thinking skills may alter the person's interests and abilities. At the same time, familiar activities can help provide stimulation and a sense of comfort.

- » **Stimulate thinking skills** by encouraging the person with Parkinson's to read or listen to news or current events.
- » **Place meaningful objects** like photographs and mementos in clear view to inspire and share memories.
- » **Listen to audiobooks**, though concentration may limit this activity to brief intervals.
- » **Encourage visits from family, friends and neighbors** to offer conversation and stimulation throughout the day.
- » **Watch game shows, sporting events or nature and history programs on TV** to provide mental stimulation.
- » **Try games or puzzles**, but tailor these to your loved one's situation to minimize frustration.
- » **Familiar tasks** like folding towels or sorting mail may be enjoyed, even when not completed "perfectly."

Watch the CareMAP video

## Activities at Home

Online at [caremap.parkinson.org](http://caremap.parkinson.org)



*For other tip sheets and caregiver support information, order the NPF book Caring and Coping.*