

Whether you are covered by Medicare, Medicaid or private insurance, fees for services such as physical therapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy will only be covered for a specified length of time. Maintaining these improvements is up to you. The time spent in therapy gave you the tools you need to maintain the gains you made. Now you just need to continue practicing at the same rate you did while attending your therapy sessions.

With that said, we know how hard it can be to keep going on your own, whether it's physical exercises, vocal exercises, or practicing new ways of doing your activities of daily living. We've put together the following list of ideas to help you maintain all the gains you've already made.

Make an Appointment

When you were in therapy you had a regularly scheduled appointment for a specific amount of time that took place a certain number of days each week. Your therapist also probably asked you to practice between appointments. Try scheduling regular appointments with yourself to maintain your gains. Write them down on the calendar just as you would a professional appointment and honor them just as you would a professional appointment.

You Don't Have to Feel Motivated to Do the Work

By setting a specific appointment to do your exercises you avoid the pitfall of waiting until you feel like doing them. Many of us do not feel like going to work everyday, cooking meals, or cutting the grass. But we do these things because our well-being and the well-being of others depend on it. Once you begin the practice session, you might find it's not as hard as you thought it would be to finish it.

Exercise with Others

All good programs for older adults and those with disabilities offer exercises to improve flexibility and range of motion. Depending on the stage of your disease and the state of your health, you may also add some aerobic and strength building exercises, too.

Investigate programs in your community. Hospitals, park districts, senior centers, YMCA's, and other disease-specific organizations may all offer programs that fit your needs. Other sources for Parkinson's-specific exercise programs include NPF Centers of Excellence and Care Centers, affiliated Chapters and support groups, and other Parkinson's centers and organizations across the country. For help in locating PD-specific resources call the NPF's toll-free Helpline at 1-800-473-4636.

For those who are housebound, contact your local Area Agency on Aging to find out if the exercise program "Strong for Life" is available in your area. This evidence-based

program developed at Stanford University is taught one-on-one or in small groups by trained volunteers. It is suitable for all chronic disease states. To find your local Area Agency on Aging:

Eldercare Locator Service 1-800-677-1116 www.eldercare.gov

Use Your Television – Don't Just Watch It

SIT AND BE FIT is a non-profit organization that produces an award-winning television exercise series by the same name. Each chair exercise program is carefully researched and designed by Mary Ann Wilson, RN, and a team of specialists to improve the health and wellness of older adults, seniors, physically limited individuals and those managing chronic conditions and chronic pain. The show is broadcast on Public Television in most markets throughout the country. Times vary, so check your local television listing or visit the website: www.sitandbefit.org

There is a variety of good video exercise programs designed specifically for people with Parkinson's. In addition to exercises for range of motion and flexibility, many of them also include some vocal exercises and even facial exercises to help reduce the masking common in PD. The following are three programs that you may wish to investigate.

The Art of Moving by John Argue

Video, book, or book and video combination

Available at book stores, Amazon.com and www.parkinsonexercise.com

510-985-2645

Delay the Disease by David Zid

Video, book, or book and video combination

Available at book stores, Amazon.com and www.delaythedisease.com

Motivating Moves by Janet Hamberg

Video only

Available through Parkinson Foundation of the Heartland

913-341-8828

www.parkinsonheartland.org

If you have completed Lee Silverman Voice Training, you can purchase their new LSVT Loud Homework Helper – Speech Exercises for Parkinson's. The video is available at their website: www.lsvtglobal.com

The gains you made during your physical, occupational and/or speech therapy are precious. We hope you will use one or more of these ideas to maintain all the great progress you made.