

# Everyday Movement

Parkinson's can affect the basic movements you rely on throughout the day, including sitting, standing and walking. These movements are used in activities like dressing, bathing and getting in and out of bed.

**This chapter introduces movement strategies that can help make everyday activities easier and safer. You can apply these ideas throughout the rest of the guide.**

## Movement self-check

The list below highlights challenges that may develop or become more noticeable as Parkinson's symptoms change over time. Use it to help identify strategies in this chapter and guide conversations with your care team.



**Check off anything that applies to you:**



Feeling unsteady when walking or turning



Taking small steps, shuffling or walking faster than I mean to



Freezing or feeling stuck while walking



Trouble lowering into or standing up from a chair



Tripping or falling



Trouble getting in or out of the car



Spending most of the day sitting or lying down

What other challenges have you noticed?

# Top Tips for Safer Movement

Use these tips as a guide and adjust based on your needs.



## Take your time

Rushing can lead to trips and falls.



## Create a safe space

Remove clutter, cords and throw rugs. Watch for pets that may move quickly underfoot. Make sure spaces are well lit, especially at night.



## Avoid multitasking

Dividing attention between walking and other tasks can affect balance.



## Improve your stability

Grab bars, handrails and well-fitting shoes can improve balance and reduce fall risk.



## Manage your energy

Plan activities for times when your medication is working well or when you feel more rested. Take breaks when needed.



## Work on strength and balance

A physical therapist can recommend exercises to make everyday movement, such as walking or climbing stairs, safer and easier.

### Care Partner Safety Tips

Be flexible. Movement and daily activities can vary throughout the day and from one day to the next. Work together to adjust plans and allow extra time.

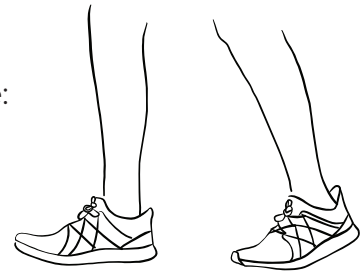
## Walking, Freezing and Falls

Parkinson's can cause walking changes such as shuffling, difficulty turning or freezing (when feet feel stuck). A physical therapist can help address these challenges and support safer movement.

### Tips for walking and turning

A physical therapist can help you practice strategies like these:

- Take bigger steps to reduce shuffling
- Lift your feet fully off the floor when stepping
- Look ahead while walking
- Turn using several small steps instead of twisting your body



### Care Partner Tip

Walk beside the person you are helping so you can match their pace and offer support. Use a calm, reassuring voice to reduce anxiety.

### If freezing happens

- Stop, stand tall, shift your weight and step forward
- Focus on stepping over a visual target, such as a line or object
- Use counting, clapping or music to create rhythm and guide movement

### Tips to prepare for a fall

Even with precautions, falls can still happen. Being prepared can help you get up safely or reach someone for help if you cannot get up on your own.

- Practice safe ways to get up after a fall with a physical therapist
- Wear a medical ID and a fall detection device
- Keep a phone or voice-activated call system and emergency contacts nearby
- Call for help if you cannot get up safely on your own to avoid further injury

## How to Choose a Mobility Aid

Mobility aids such as walkers or wheelchairs can make movement easier when walking feels unsteady or tiring. Insurance may cover these devices with a doctor's prescription. A physical therapist can help you choose the right aid, adjust it to fit and show you how to use it.

### Choosing a walker

Different walker styles offer different levels of support:

- **2-wheeled walker:** Provides steady support for balance. A tray or bag can help carry items.
- **4-wheeled walker (rollator):** Turns more easily and often includes a seat and basket but may be less stable than a 2-wheeled walker.
- **Walker without wheels:** Must be lifted to move and may increase the risk of losing balance.



### Choosing a wheelchair

- **Folding wheelchair:** Lightweight and easier to store or transport but often requires someone to push it.
- **Everyday wheelchair:** May include features such as back support, cushions and footrests for comfort and positioning.

### Getting comfortable with a mobility aid

- It may take time to adjust to using a mobility aid.
- Many people find the right aid helps them stay active and move around more comfortably.

#### Care Partner Tip

Adjusting to new habits is often hard. Offering gentle reminders can help support consistent use of mobility aids.

## Sitting and Standing

Standing up or sitting down may take more effort as Parkinson's symptoms change.

### What may help

- Use chairs with armrests and higher seats
- Before sitting, move back until your legs touch the chair
- Before standing, scoot to the edge of the seat, lean forward and push up with your hands
- Helpful tools may include lift chairs, stand-assist rails or gait belts

### Care Partner Tip

When assisting with standing use clear cues like “nose over toes.”

## Getting In and Out of Cars

Getting in and out of a car can be challenging because it combines stepping, turning and sitting or standing, often in tight or uneven spaces.

### What may help

- Park where there is space to open the door fully and step onto a flat surface
- Take your time and pause before standing or sitting if you feel unsteady
- Sit first, then bring your legs into the car
- Use the door frame or seat for support when getting in or out of the car
- Lock the wheels of walkers or wheelchairs before moving in or out



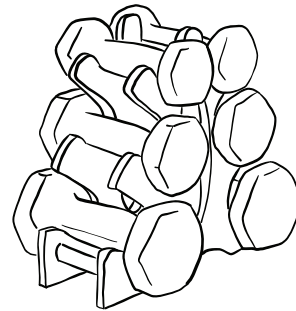
## Movement Matters

Regular movement supports strength, flexibility and overall well-being. For Parkinson's, exercise can also help manage symptoms.

As symptoms change, the way someone stays active may also change. Continuing to move in ways that work for you can still support strength and well-being.

Aim for about 30 minutes of activity each day if possible. This can be broken into shorter sessions. Examples may include:

- Walking, cycling or water exercise
- Chair-based exercises if standing is difficult
- Gentle stretching or range-of-motion exercises
- Small movements in bed or a chair to help circulation and comfort



### Care Partner Tip

Parkinson's affects brain chemicals that help control movement and can also affect mood and motivation. This may make it harder to get started with activities. Enjoyable activities and moving together can make it easier to stay active.

## Helpful Resources

Learn more about movement, balance and fall prevention at [Parkinson.org/Library](https://www.parkinson.org/Library).

Watch CareMAP videos for practical tools and tips designed for care partners at [Parkinson.org/CareMAP](https://www.parkinson.org/CareMAP). Look for topics such as “changes around the house,” “movement and falls” and “travel and transportation.”