Tips for Maintaining Mobility with Parkinson’s Disease

The effects of Parkinson’s disease on a person’s mobility make it increasingly difficult to navigate the world around them. Typical mobility constraints suffered by those with Parkinson’s disease include rigidity in the muscles, bradykinesia, freezing mid-movement, posture instability and the inability to switch tasks or multitask. Since medication or surgery usually fails to treat these mobility constraints, comprehensive exercise is a welcome solution.

Benefits of Exercise for Parkinson’s Disease

- Strengthened muscles
- Improved flexibility
- Enhanced balance, gait and posture, which lowers the risk of falls
- Improved cognitive functioning through neuroplasticity
- Protection from and possible slowing of brain degeneration
- Emotional well-being and self-esteem boost

Effective Exercises for Maintaining Mobility

The best kinds of exercise for improving mobility incorporate both physical and cognitive elements to enhance motor skills. Exercises that utilize symmetry and non-automatic movements strengthen the brain as well as the body.

- **Tai Chi** – Increases stability, improves posture and balance and enhances coordination
- **Kayaking** – Improves speed, helps treat rigidity through torso rotation and improves coordination
- **Agility Courses** – Enhance mobility in tight spaces and with quick changes in direction
- **Boxing** – Helps with posture, timing, completing fast actions and sequential movements
- **Lunges** – Improve posture and balance and increase stability
- **Pre-Pilates** – Helps control body movements, such as rotation and extension of the limbs, and improves functional transitions used in daily activities

In addition to these exercises, adding cognitive elements to more automatic, physical exercises is beneficial to mobility as well. For example, reading while walking on a treadmill works the brain and the body. Talk to your doctor or physical therapist before starting new exercises to make sure they are safe for your health condition.

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