
Fighting Fatigue: Enhancing Energy and Endurance

Maintaining an active lifestyle is an important step in living well with Parkinson's. Research has shown approximately one third of individuals with Parkinson's report fatigue may be a limiting factor in their daily routine. There are a number of factors that contribute to feeling tired, a lack of energy, or decreased endurance. Consider the following for coping with or minimizing the effects of fatigue in daily activities:

Factors Contributing to Fatigue:

- Lack of exercise or sedentary lifestyle
- Increased effort required due to slowness, muscle stiffness, or tremor.
- Greater concentration to perform tasks that are no longer "automatic"
- Sleep disturbances resulting from muscle cramping, "restless legs", or difficulty turning in bed.
- Changes in mood or feelings of depression may sap energy levels.
- Fluctuations in mobility related to level of PD medications.

Useful Steps to Maximize Energy and Endurance:

- Seek to identify and minimize/eliminate the major sources of stress and fatigue in your daily routine
- Avoid over-scheduling... learn to say no to added responsibilities or tasks you don't enjoy
- Perform regular exercise – both physical and mental – to build endurance and stamina
- Make sure you schedule adequate time for rest and sleep into your daily routine
- Plan tasks and gather supplies to save un-necessary steps
- Take frequent breaks
- Delegate or hire help for tasks you find particularly stressful or tiring
- Take advantage of convenience products, foods and gadgets
- Recognize your limits to avoid over-exertion
- Plan highest levels of activity at times you are well rested and medications are working well

Involving Your Team

Consult with an occupational therapist for an assessment and individual recommendations for energy conservation and enhancement.