

PARKINSON'S SYMPTOMS: STRATEGIES TO DELAY

Working with Parkinson's clients for 8 years, I can tell you it's true:
If you meet one person with PD, you've met one person with PD!
Meaning, each person presents differently.

I've seen it all and I program my sessions to address specific concerns.

So, let's talk about some of them, along with the strategies to help delay or even reverse symptoms.

1. Freezing episodes

Very common when in a tight space, going through a doorway, etc.

IDEAS:

- Take a step backwards then try going forward
- Use a mark on the floor or a laser as a target for your first step
- Use a metronome when walking which will give you a "rhythm"
- Move an arm up and down, then try taking a step
- Try to relax your brow and jaw
- Try "rocking" on your feet back and forth, then take a step

2. Small Steps

Very common, not only with PD, but also the general aging public.

IDEAS:

- Practice stepping over hurdles (while holding on)
- Practice stepping with BIG steps and BIG arm swings
- Stand in front of a step and tap the top of it with alternating feet

3. Posture

Also common is to look down when walking rather than forward. Again, this occurs often in the general aging population as well.

IDEAS:

- Stand with the backs of your feet, your glutes shoulders and head touching a wall and HOLD for up to a minute
- Perform rows using a resistance band to strengthen your posture muscles
- Practice looking forward when doing the stepping exercises listed above

I always recommend starting small and increasing the intensity or duration as indicated by the client's progress.

When you practice these movements, you are training both your body and your mind. What does that mean? We want to create new neural pathways in the brain where movements become more automatic. For example, if we practice catching a fall in the gym, you will be more likely to remember that movement pattern when it occurs "in real life."