

## Living Your Best Life With Parkinson's

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### Safety First

***Have a Buddy System:*** arrange with a friend or neighbor to text each other every day. You must answer by a certain time, say noon. No answer and the Buddy calls you. No answer and the Buddy comes to check on you or calls someone to go check on you, if you don't live near each other. Having a Buddy System makes sure that both you and your friend are safe. If help is needed, it's on its way.

***Install a Lock Box:*** Having a lock box installed on your back door with a key inside means that when someone needs to get into your home to check on you they know exactly where the key is. They don't have to go searching for it. The lock box code can be a sticky note they keep on their refrigerator. Time is critical in an emergency situation.

***Falls:*** If falls are a concern get a watch that monitors falls and sends a signal to someone that you've fallen. Life Alert or Medical Guardian are personal medical alert systems that are advertised in AARP Magazine. These are a small fob that you wear and can use in an emergency.

***Motion Sensor Lights:*** Install motion sensor lights in your hallway, bathroom, bedroom, kitchen, anywhere you might walk at night. They safely light a path for you so you don't have to go searching in the dark for the light switch. They are very inexpensive on Amazon.

***Bathroom:*** The bathroom is one of the most dangerous rooms in the home. Make sure that you have grab bars in your shower, a bench to sit on if you feel dizzy or tired while showering, a grab bar near the toilet to assist in getting up. Get a raised toilet seat or raised toilet. Have a safe, secure non-slip shower mat on the floor in the shower. Avoid other rugs in the bathroom unless they are non-slip.

***Bedroom:*** Install a grab bar by your bed to help get out of bed. If dealing with REM Sleep Disorder consider mattress guards that slide under the mattress but provide rails on the side of the bed. Have motion sensor lights in the bedroom. Keep a phone nearby. Consider satin sheets to make it easier to roll over. Put a flashlight on the nightstand in case of a power outage. If needed, put a bedside commode or handheld urinal near the bed. Have good room darkening shades to ensure good sleep. Perhaps an

air purifier if you are sensitive to dust or pet dander. Make the bedroom a peaceful haven.

**Area Rugs:** Avoid small area rugs unless they are non-slip or taped down. Large room size rugs are better and safer as furniture will keep them in place. They also provide a warm, cozy atmosphere and deaden sound.

**Yak Trax:** These are grippers that you slide onto your shoes when going out in the ice or snow. You can find them on Amazon for about \$20 or so. Broken bones & a hospital stay can worsen your PD symptoms.

## **Make Life Easier**

**Order Groceries Online:** Many local stores like Sprouts and Walmart offer online shopping. Once you set up the account it becomes quite easy to reorder the same items as needed. When your order is ready you just drive up and they bring the groceries out to you.

**Meal Services:** There are so many meal services out there now. Blue Apron, Hello Fresh, Purple Carrot and Green Chef are just a few. They offer either the ingredients to make a lovely meal or fully prepared meals that you just heat up. These are usually healthy meals with fresh ingredients. Prices vary so find what works for your budget. A few meals a week ensures healthy meals with little work for you.

**Prepared Meals:** Look for healthy frozen meals. Trader Joe's has some very nice frozen entrees, both Italian and East Indian. Check the sodium and sugar amounts and keep these low. Again, a quick option when tired.

**Uber Meal Delivery:** Quick way to get great local meals w/o leaving home.

**Use Technology:** There are so many great techie tricks out there now to make life easier. An Amazon Dot Speaker can connect to lights, TV, doorbells, music apps, answer your phone, make phone calls for you all with a voice command. They cost about \$40 and are well worth it.

**Text With Voice:** Go to the text function on your phone & hold down the mic icon and speak slowly and clearly to text effortlessly. Check to make sure that the text says what you want it to.

**Mail Order/Online RX Drugs:** Many Medicare plans offer 90-day prescription drug orders that are mailed to your home. They automatically send the same order for the next 90 days. No more hassles at the pharmacy. Orders are easy to change with a phone call.

***Easier Dressing Options:*** Slip on shoes that you don't have to tie, shirts that snap close rather than button, elastic waist pants and many other options are now available. If you are having difficulty dressing yourself, look for some of these items and make life easier for you!

***Get Outside Help:*** Sometimes you just need outside help, someone to come in every week, or every other week and clean, wash clothes, change the bed or maybe do your grocery shopping for you. There are people willing to do this. It may cost from \$25 -\$35/hour or check with Coming Home Connections (505-988-2468) to see if they have a volunteer available to help.

***Create a System:*** Tired of constantly looking for your wallet or keys? Create a specific place, a kitchen or bedroom drawer, where you ALWAYS put your wallet, keys, glasses, anything that you want to find later. Once you get used to your system you can quit worrying about losing stuff.

***Copy Your Wallet:*** Make a photocopy or picture on your cell phone of the front and back of all your credit cards, driver's license and anything else that's important and kept in your wallet. Have an "Important Information" file in paper or on your phone and keep these copies there. If you happen to lose your wallet you have all the information you need to cancel cards, etc.

## **Immune System Health**

***Wear a Mask:*** Especially in the winter flu and cold season or when in large crowds, wear a mask and keep yourself safe. Getting sick is much harder on you when you already have a chronic illness.

***Immune Support:*** Use products that can support your immune system and keep it healthy. Try Cordyceps (a mushroom), Vitamin C, electrolyte drinks like Emergen C, vitamins, Omega 3s, etc. Avoid white flour and sugar. Drink lots of good, filtered water. Get a Brita water filter. NM water is not that healthy! Eat lots of fruits and vegetables.

***Teeth Brushing:*** Dental health is very important to overall health. Make sure that you are brushing several times a day. The Phillips 200 is a great electric toothbrush that does all the brushing for you. You just hold it to your teeth and gumline. It costs about \$40 on Amazon. Floss or use dental picks every day.

***Exercise, Exercise, Exercise:*** Get out there and walk, bike, dance, do yoga or Tai Chi, Rock Steady Boxing, Movement 360, get PT, OT, try

tennis. pickleball or skiing. Find something that brings you JOY and do it every day.

### **Get Out of The House**

Go for a walk or hike. Call a friend and go to the movies, out to lunch or dinner, or for a walk or hike. Volunteer somewhere: the food bank, an animal shelter, homeless shelter, your neighborhood school, a local theater group, some non-profit, read to kids, help someone else. Get to a PD support group or the PD Clubhouse every month. Be with your peeps!

### **Find YOUR Passion**

Finding Passion and Purpose will shift your life and bring you JOY! What are your expectations for living with a chronic illness? You still have a life ahead of you. What are you going to do with it today?

When diagnosed with a chronic illness like PD it's easy to become self-absorbed with all the new and continuous requirements of the disorder; doctor appointments, medications, tests, exercise programs, etc.

Who you were before the diagnosis becomes overshadowed by who you are now – someone living with PD. Activities that used to bring you joy or that you loved to do are left behind or become more difficult. There is no time or energy for them. Pieces of who you were before PD begin to disappear.

Look again at these activities that brought you joy. Try to integrate them into your life again. Also, look to incorporate activities that are outside yourself, activities that allow you to give to another in some small way. I guarantee this will make your life more joyful. Things like reaching out to a friend or neighbor, inviting a friend to coffee, reading to a child, giving a KIND Bar to a homeless person, buying the car behind you in the Starbuck's line a coffee.

Do something every day that brings you JOY and ignites PASSION FOR LIFE!

And don't forget to LAUGH, LAUGH, LAUGH every day! A good belly laugh is the BEST MEDICINE!