

**Mayo Clinic**, “When your condition threatens to immobilize you, exercise keeps you moving... to retain your mobility and function, use it or lose it.”\*

\* <http://www.befitoverfifty.com/pages/thera.htm>



## Getting started

- Consult your doctor before beginning any exercise regimen.
- Find a variety of activities you enjoy and rotate through them to avoid boredom.
- Include stretching and strengthening exercises to improve flexibility and fitness necessary to maintain independence.
- Slowly increase the length and intensity of your workout, until you reach an hour.
- When your energy level is low, divide your routine into smaller segments.

This brochure is part of the Parkinson Support Center of Kentuckiana's (PSCKY) 2010 “Living Well with Parkinson's Disease” program. PSCKY's mission is to provide services that improve the quality of life for the Parkinson's community; to promote public awareness; to contribute to the local and national efforts to raise funds for support; and to accelerate the research for a cure.

[www.pscky.org](http://www.pscky.org)

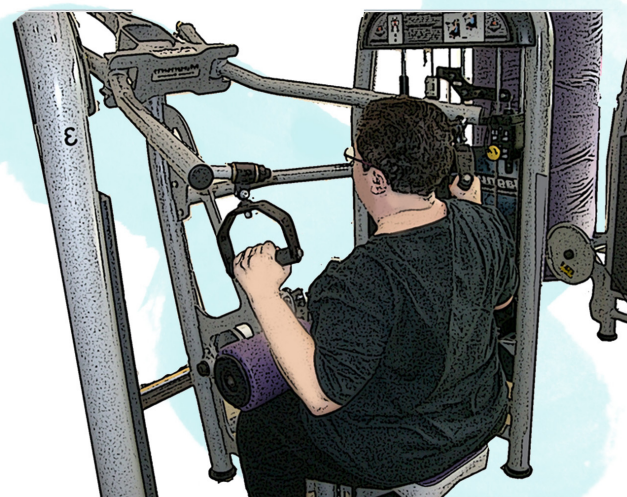


## At the gym

If possible, have a certified personal trainer evaluate your fitness level, determine exercises best suited to your needs and abilities, help you set realistic goals for improvement, and develop a written, daily workout plan to promote your success.

Obtain a list of your gym's trainers and read their biographies, looking for those whose specialties (e.g. weight training, flexibility, etc.) match your needs and who have experience working with PWP or other chronic illnesses.

Plan to exercise at the time of day when your medicines usually are working best. Recruit a friend to work out with you and hold you to task if you don't show up.



Long distance girlfriends Jean Burns and Sheryl Jedlinski co-founded [pdplan4life.com](http://pdplan4life.com) in June 2007 to “give back” to the Parkinson's community. Through their web site and presentations at conferences nationwide, the two share their personal challenges and triumphs to inspire and empower others to “live well with Parkinson's.”

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# Exercise

[www.pdplan4life.com](http://www.pdplan4life.com)



PDPlan4Life



## Exercising to live well with PD

*“A year after learning I had Parkinson's disease (PD), I could barely lift a gallon of milk from the trunk of my car,” Sheryl recalls. “I searched in vain for a magic pill that could slow PD progression. Ironically, my only hope appeared to be daily exercise — something I had avoided my entire life.”*

“Exercise seems to protect the dopamine-producing nerve cells that are lost in Parkinson's, helping them work better and survive longer. This could potentially slow down the progression of the condition – something no current treatment for Parkinson's can do.”\*

Professor Michael Zigmond,  
University of Pittsburgh



“Regular physical activity:

- Minimizes further damage to neurons in the brain.
- Decreases loss of cognitive skills.
- Increases muscle control and strength.
- Improves balance and coordination.
- Reduces depression.”\*\*



Clinical trials are underway to determine which exercises (e.g. tai chi, tango dancing, etc.) performed at what intensity, for how long and how often provide optimum results. Data in animal models of PD suggests that the degree of neuroprotection and neurorecovery is greatest the earlier exercise is started and the more we sweat.\*\*\*

So what are you waiting for? Get up off your couch and get movin'!

*“I have seen patients improve... without any change in medications just because they started exercising.”*

Dr. Joseph Jankovic, Director,  
PD Center and Movement Disorders Clinic  
Baylor College of Medicine  
(*Neurology Now*, Spring 2005)

\*([http://www.parkinsons.org.uk/research/research\\_news/spring\\_exercise\\_conference.aspx](http://www.parkinsons.org.uk/research/research_news/spring_exercise_conference.aspx))

\*\* ([http://www.centralohioparkinson.org/poc/view\\_doc.php?type=doc&id=22466&cn=0](http://www.centralohioparkinson.org/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=22466&cn=0))

\*\*\*(<http://health.einnews.com/pr-news/70607-researchers-say-exercises-can-reduce-parkinson-s-effects>)



## Wii®? Oui! \*

Our best hope for living well with PD may lie not in popping more and more pills, but rather in playing the Nintendo Wii® game system in the safety and comfort of our own homes.

Some researchers say that playing Wii® simulated sports and activities may actually slow PD progression by keeping nerve cells active in the part of the brain that controls movement and coordination. Their conclusion is based on the exceptionally strong results of an eight-week study conducted by the Medical College of Georgia.



All 18 PWP who participated showed significant improvements in rigidity, movement, fine motor skills, coordination, and energy levels, and decreased depression levels. This was after playing Wii Sports® three hours a week for only four weeks. Virtual boxing, bowling, and tennis were chosen for their emphasis on aerobic fitness, bilateral movement, balance, and fast pace, as well as visual perception, hand-eye coordination, and sequenced movement.

An upcoming study will assess whether the Wii Fit® can improve balance and aerobic fitness in PWP.



\* [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life\\_and\\_style/health/features/article6840314.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/health/features/article6840314.ece)

## Fun games trump Wii's® insensitivity

If your feelings are easily hurt, you will have to toughen up to play Nintendo's Wii®. It "knows if you've been good or bad" and won't miss the opportunity to let you know it.

If you gain so much as a pound, it demands an explanation. Are YOU eating too much, eating too late at night, snacking? We

should not have to answer these questions. Nor should we be scolded for "fidgeting" while the Wii Fit® calibrates the balance board. Everyone knows that PWP are "movers and shakers."

If you are like me, however, and thrive on competition, you may be willing to overlook the Wii's® poor interpersonal skills in order to trade boring exercises for games that allow us to have fun with family and friends. In Jean's case, this means sending me "woo hoo" emails whenever she hits a new personal best. We are awaiting the release of Wii® Anonymous to help Jean overcome her competitiveness gone wild.

Sheryl



## "No pain, no gain"

The Pilates Reformer looks uncannily like a Medieval torture device, yet I was drawn to it by the promise that it could ease (though not eliminate) the dystonia pain in my toes and feet by enabling me to exercise them in a variety of ways not otherwise possible.

Reformer training consists of low-impact, progressive resistance-based exercises performed while sitting, kneeling, and lying on a gliding carriage inside a wooden frame connected to springs and straps. Movements are controlled, sometimes limited to a few inches with a lot of holding to make it more difficult.

The exercises target my whole body, challenging my balance, building core



strength and flexibility, and improving posture and motor control. My certified trainer modifies exercises on the fly depending on how I am feeling on any given day.

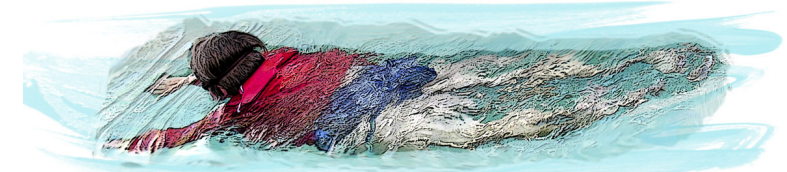
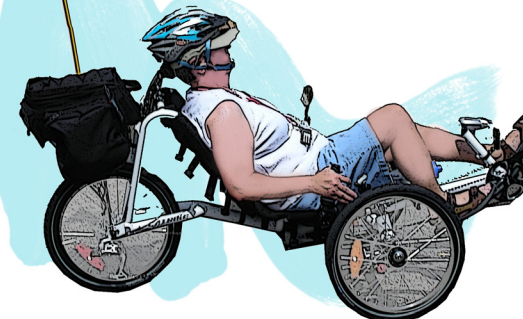
I end each session with a renewed sense of well-being... the key to living well with PD.

Sheryl

## A "try-athlete,"\* not quite a tri-athlete

Living in the desert southwest, I can exercise outdoors year round without having to adhere to a schedule or venture outside of my neighborhood. My two favorite activities are swimming and riding my recumbent tricycle.

My neighborhood pool is perfect for swimming, walking laps, stretching, and doing water aerobics. Exercising in water is good for PWP because the water supports weak muscles, and allows us to move



freely without the risk of falling. When I'm in the water, my stiffness disappears, and I almost forget that I have Parkinson's disease.

Whizzing up and down neighborhood streets and golf cart paths (when the golf course is closed) on my recumbent tricycle is not only fun, it also helps restore my sense of "fitting in," and eliminates balance problems.

A recumbent tricycle is fairly expensive, but you may find it surprisingly affordable when compared to the cost of a gym membership.

Jean

\*"try-athlete" from <http://www.wobblywilliams.com>