

FINDING INNER PEACE

Meditation & Parkinson's



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Living with Parkinson disease is a journey marked by both physical and emotional challenges. It can affect not only one's motor functions but also their mental and emotional well-being. The practice of meditation can add a holistic approach to living well with Parkinson's. Meditation practices can empower individuals with Parkinson's and/or care partners to nurture their well-being and find relief amidst the daily challenges they face. Meditation is a practice that focuses on mindfulness, relaxation, and the cultivation of inner peace. While it is not a cure for Parkinson's, it can be a valuable complementary approach to improve one's overall quality of life.

So how can meditation benefit individuals living with or affected by Parkinson's? Meditation can help reduce stress by promoting a sense of calm and emotional well-being, which can alleviate some of

these symptoms of stress and anxiety. Studies have shown that meditation can also improve sleep. Issues with sleep are common in Parkinson's and with care partners; meditation can promote better sleep quality and reduce insomnia. A well-rested body and mind can help manage the condition and contend with life's challenges more effectively. Meditation can also improve our emotional resilience and mental clarity. Meditation can enhance cognitive function by training the mind to stay present and focused which can also cultivate emotional resilience.

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of different types and styles of meditation. Many people utilize different styles for different reasons/situations. Finding what works best for you, will take time and practice. We've included a few types here to get you started.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation is a meditation designed to release tension in the muscles and body. This practice can be done in a seated or laying position:

- 🌀 Find a quiet and comfortable space, either sitting in a chair or lying down.
- 🌀 Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to calm your mind.
- 🌀 Begin by directing your focus to your toes, consciously tensing the muscles in your toes, and then slowly releasing the tension as you exhale.
- 🌀 Progressively move up through your feet, ankles, calves, and continue this process, including your legs, thighs, hips, abdomen, arms, hands, shoulders, neck, and face.
- 🌀 Pay extra attention to areas that feel particularly tense or rigid.
- 🌀 Finish with a few deep breaths, gently returning your awareness to the present moment.

Guided Imagery Meditation

Guided imagery is a meditation technique that utilizes vivid mental images to promote relaxation, healing, and emotional well-being. This practice can help individuals find comfort and tranquility:

- ✎ Sit in a quiet and comfortable space, closing your eyes and taking deep, calming breaths.
- ✎ Imagine a place that brings you peace and joy. It could be a tranquil beach, a serene forest, or any location that resonates with you.
- ✎ Engage all your senses as you envision this place. For example, if your place is a serene forest: feel the warmth of the sun on your skin, hear the soothing sounds of a babbling brook, smell the resinous aroma of pine, see the beauty in the various earthy greens, and taste the fresh air.
- ✎ Visualize yourself moving through this peaceful setting. Imagine the ease with which you can walk, run, or simply exist in this space.



- ✎ As you continue to immerse yourself in this tranquil world, focus on the sense of freedom and comfort it brings.
- ✎ Stay in this guided imagery meditation for as long as you find it soothing.
- ✎ When you're ready to conclude, take a few deep breaths, gradually returning to the present moment.

Mindful Walking Meditation for Balance and Mobility

For individuals with Parkinson's, maintaining balance and mobility can be a challenge. Mindful walking meditation helps improve balance and coordination while promoting a sense of grounding and stability. Here's how to do it:



- ✎ Find a quiet and safe place to walk, preferably with minimal distractions.
- ✎ Stand still for a moment, focusing on your breath and centering yourself.
- ✎ Begin walking slowly and deliberately, think heel to toe with each step.
- ✎ Pay close attention to each movement, how your feet lift, move, and touch the ground.
- ✎ Feel the connection between your feet and the earth beneath you.
- ✎ If you experience any imbalance, pause, and regain your composure before continuing.
- ✎ Continue walking for about 10 minutes, paying attention to each step and your breath.
- ✎ As you finish, stand still again, take a few deep breaths, and acknowledge the experience.