

Parkinson PULSE

Connecting people living with Parkinson disease in Alberta



COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES



COMPLEMENTARY APPROACHES TO STAY HEALTHY AND IMPROVE YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE

MARCH
9



**PANDEMONIUM FOR PARKINSONS
BOW ISLAND, ALBERTA**

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APRIL
11



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AND COOL ENTERTAINMENT.

SEPTEMBER
7/8



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ACROSS ALBERTA**

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NOVEMBER
2



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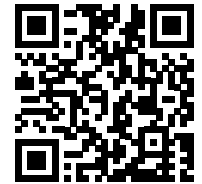
Parkinson Association of Alberta is the source for support, education and inspiration for people impacted by Parkinson disease and Parkinson's Plus Syndromes, and engagement in important quality of life research with an emphasis on Alberta.



Articles and information contained in the Parkinson Pulse are provided solely for the reader's interest.
Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of Parkinson Association of Alberta and are NOT intended as medical advice. Please consult your doctor or neurologist in all matters relating to health concerns or medication.

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Message from our Executive Director

Dear friends,

Thank you for an incredible year. 2023 was my fourth year at Parkinson Association of Alberta (PAA) and I am so honoured I get to work with an incredible group of staff and volunteers and a truly invested Board of Directors in support of Alberta's amazing Parkinson's community.

We know that the occasions of Parkinson's diagnosis are increasing in Alberta and around the world at an alarming pace. We also know that as the fasted growing neurological condition in the world, there is still far too little attention and investment in treatments, care and support for people affected. In 2023, Parkinson Association of Alberta worked to advocate for improved access to care, investment in programs and support that have demonstrated impact on quality of life, and increased education for those working in continuing care. These efforts will continue in 2024 beginning with a submission for the 2024/25 Government of Alberta budget consultation that emphasizes the unique needs of those living with Parkinson disease and Parkinson's Plus Syndromes.

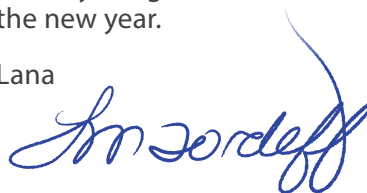
In 2023 (to the end of November), Parkinson Association of Alberta welcomed a record 396 new clients. Alberta is blessed with two exceptional Movement Disorders Programs and Community Neurologists that focus on Parkinson's. They are the primary source of referral to PAA. We are grateful to them and will continue to support the needs of those newly diagnosed or whose circumstances bring them our way.

Parkinson Association of Alberta continues to face economic challenges. We know this is a reality for not only small charities, but for all manner of businesses and individuals. Our goals for 2024 include continued responsible stewardship of donor investments with efficient delivery of programs and services that provide the most meaning and impact to those who participate. We will continue to listen to the changing needs of our clients and our community.

Which brings me to this edition of Pulse Magazine. One of the most common themes, regardless of the symptom or stage of disease, is around "alternative" therapies. Parkinson Association of Alberta always recommends professional medical care first and foundational and so the term "alternative" causes some concern at times. Complementary therapies, on the other hand, are often well worth consideration. Unfortunately, we all too often see promises of a quick fix or claims of a cure, which can cause people to spend a significant amount of time, money and emotional investment on few or no overall benefits to their health. In the following pages, our team shares some credible resources for complementary therapies that may improve certain functions and overall quality of life for those living with a Parkinson's diagnosis. As always, if you have any questions or comments, we'd love to hear from you.

Thank you again and all our best for a gentle start to the new year.

Lana



COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES

Written By:
Brandi La Bonte



Conventional (standard/mainstream), complementary, integrative, and alternative. These are terms used in conjunction with the words medicine, care, or treatments. Conventional medicine refers to the treatments currently used in the Canadian healthcare system to treat Parkinson's, other diseases/illness, and healthcare matters. You may also hear this referred to as standard medical practice. Conventional medicine focuses on diagnosing, treating, and preventing (when possible) conditions and symptoms using knowledge gained from scientific research and data. Practitioners include medical doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals (i.e.: physiotherapists, occupational therapists, pharmacists, psychologists, speech language pathologists, etc.).

For people with Parkinson's (and others) conventional medicine is their only or at least primary approach to treating their disease or illness. And with good

reason, conventional medicine bases its practices on only the most conclusive scientific evidence. However, as people traverse the path to living well; be it with Parkinson disease or not, some people will look into or try approaches that have been developed outside of standard medical practice. These approaches are often referred to as "complementary" or "alternative". Though many believe that these two terms are interchangeable, they are in fact, two separate entities.

Alternative treatments are non-mainstream practices used instead of standard medical treatments. As there are currently no alternative treatments to treat, cure or prevent Parkinson disease; we will focus solely on complementary options.

Complementary treatments are non-mainstream practices used in conjunction with standard medical treatments. Now, before delving into complementary



Types of Complementary Approaches

What is considered complementary in terms of approaches/treatments available changes frequently as options undergo testing and move into mainstream practice. According to the US Department of Health and Human Services' National Centre for Complementary and Integrative Health, complementary approaches are divided into three categories:

» **Nutritional** » **Psychological** » **Physical**

As we explore these categories below, it is good to remember that the distinctions between them are not always clear cut, with some options using techniques from more than one category.

Nutritional Approaches

(previously called Natural or Biologically Based)

Nutritional approaches use naturally occurring substances (ingredients found in nature) to promote wellness. They can include foods or diets, vitamins, minerals, pro/prebiotics, and herbal/botanical supplements.



It is important to note in this category that though many of these naturally occurring substances/products are considered "safe" because they are present in, or produced by, nature; this is not always necessarily the case. In some cases, vitamins, minerals, and herbal supplements can affect how other medications work or cause other damage. For example, some studies have shown that kava kava, an herb often used to treat stress and anxiety, can cause

treatments it is important to note a couple of key factors. First and foremost, before undertaking any complementary treatment it is important to have a discussion with your Parkinson's neurologist and/or general practitioner. While many health professionals are very supportive of a variety of complementary treatment options; some may be unenthusiastic. The reasoning behind this is often the second key factor, which is that many complementary approaches have not been scientifically tested in the same way as standard medical treatments thus leaving information on effectiveness in question. Or, they may have been studied from a general perspective, and not in regard to a specific-disease or medical condition, which may negate or mis-represent findings. And, while some complementary treatments are supported by empirical evidence on safety and effectiveness, not all are regulated by any governing body and as such it is up to the individual to investigate the benefits and side effects, as well as the credentials and experience of anyone offering advice or recommendations on such treatments.

Did you know that according to the Fraser Institute, more than 79% of Canadians have used at least one complementary approach to stay healthy and improve their quality of life? This doesn't mean that people are abandoning mainstream medical treatments, especially in Parkinson disease where no alternative treatments exist, but rather complementing them with healthy living and mind-body practices that empower people to have a more proactive level of participation in their own well-being.

liver damage; while too much magnesium can cause toxicity resulting in low mood/depression, muscle weakness, low blood pressure, or even cardiac arrest. Too much of any vitamin, mineral, or supplement is not safe, even for a healthy person. It is imperative that you speak with your primary physician before taking any additional dietary supplements, vitamins, minerals, or beginning any significant changes in diet.

Physical Approaches

(previously called Manipulative and Body-Based)

Physical approaches address various issues through bodily manipulation. This manipulation typically includes the movement or realignment of various parts of the body and is administered by a trained practitioner. Examples of manipulative and body-based therapies include, but are not limited to, massage, reflexology, chiropractic, and postural re-education.



Psychological Approaches

(previously called Mind-Body Interventions)

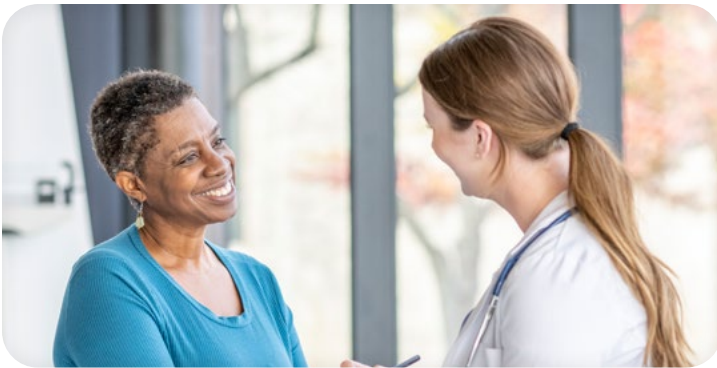
These psychological approaches or mind-body interventions are based on the belief that mental and emotional factors can influence one's physical health. From spiritual to behavioral, psychologic to social, mind-body interventions typically focus on strategies that are believed to promote health such as stress/tension reduction and relaxation. Examples of mind-body interventions include, but are not limited to, meditation and other relaxation techniques, hypnotherapy, guided imagery, or music therapy.



There are also options that are a combination of the above. For example, tai chi and yoga which are a combination of physical and psychological, or mindful eating which is a combination of nutritional and psychological. And, on a larger scale Indigenous Healing and Wellness practices which are comprised of all three and more aptly described as a whole health system that encompasses a range of holistic treatments used by indigenous healers for a multitude of issues and/or to promote health and wellbeing.

These practices can include using ceremonies, plant, animal, mineral, or energy-based options, and physical or hands-on techniques. While the beliefs and practices may vary from community to community, there is often a shared foundation of values and historical experiences.

The advantages of complementary treatments include the diversity, availability, and affordability of options. As a result, complementary treatments have the potential to contribute to a more robust approach when it comes to living well and maintaining a healthy body and mind.



When determining if you should use a complementary treatment option, ask yourself the following questions:

- » Have I done adequate research using reputable sources (university websites, medical journals/ research)?
- » Have I consulted with my medical health care team about this intervention?

Working with your medical doctor can help you make an informed decision regarding complementary treatment options. And, even if they cannot recommend a specific practitioner, they can help you understand the possible risks and benefits before trying any given complementary treatment approach.

It is good to remember that the benefits of complementary treatments vary from person to person and approach to approach. However, many who take part in complementary treatments note positive effects in terms of stress and tension reduction, relaxation, lower blood pressure, increased mental clarity and even pain relief.

You may have noticed one of the terms from the opening line has not yet been covered – integrative. An integrative approach focuses on you as a whole person and not just your illness or disease. This approach believes that your physical, mental,

emotional, and social needs affect your health and wellbeing. Using an evidence-based approach it aims to understand the underlying cause of symptoms and conditions by looking at various aspects of life that contribute to your health/wellbeing. An integrative approach brings together conventional medicine AND complementary approaches to achieve optimal health and wellbeing.

Parkinson Association of Alberta's approach to helping people live well with Parkinson's has always been both an individual and an integrative one. So just what does that mean? Well as many of you are aware, not only does Parkinson's manifest itself differently in different people; it also encompasses a wide range of symptom types and severities. Understanding that life with Parkinson disease is as unique as the fingerprints of those living with and affected by it; we aim to offer people the right support, in the right place, at the right time throughout an individual's or family's Parkinson's journey.

For Parkinson Association of Alberta an integrative approach can be simplified as follows:

- » **It is about the "whole person".**
YOU are the most important piece in the "living well with Parkinson's" puzzle. We offer supports designed to address the needs of your body, mind, and spirit.
- » **It is effective in addressing the complexities and changing needs of people with Parkinson disease.**
- » **It takes a partnership approach.**
There is no, one "right way" to deal with Parkinson disease. From standard accepted medical practice to psycho-social support to complementary approaches and beyond – there are a multitude of ways that can help people live well with Parkinson disease and Parkinson's Plus Syndromes.

Combining a traditional medicine approach with complementary treatments options can provide an individual a well rounded and integrative approach to living well. With a wide variety of complementary treatment options available, (some even covered by insurance - massage, acupuncture, etc.) there are many ways to customize your own living well approach! In this issue of Pulse, we highlight a few different complementary treatment options. This is not to say that Parkinson Association of Alberta recommends any one program or complementary approach in general or over another; rather we endeavor to seek out and tell you about the fact-based options available to you on your journey to live well whether you have Parkinson's or love someone who does.

BUILDING BLOCKS OF HEALTH

Nutrition & Parkinson's



Written by: Shameem Kizar, BsC RD, Kaye Edmonton Clinic, Movement Disorders Program

When we talk about complementary therapies and what is best for people with Parkinson disease, there often are questions about what is the best diet, how should I incorporate protein, or what vitamins/supplements are beneficial? It is important to note that there is no one diet, vitamin, or supplement that is proven best for people with Parkinson's. Nor will any cure, reverse, or slow down the progression of Parkinson disease. Rather, incorporating a healthy diet and appropriate vitamins/supplements can help improve one's overall health and address some Parkinson's related issues such as constipation, muscle retention, and fatigue. This article includes nutritional information on a variety of topics.

Nutrition and PD

Are you confused by all the information out there on nutrition? Who do you trust – your GP, Google, Tik Tok, your neighbours's aunt's cousin's friend??? It can be very confusing and honestly it can make your head swim. We live in an age where too much information availability might not be as beneficial as we think.

When it comes to healthy eating for Parkinson's, I like to take the approach of balanced eating. What is balanced eating? It's basically eating a variety of foods in the right proportions to maintain health. It's making sure you have all the building blocks of nutrition to meet your requirements. There are many

good examples of balanced eating: The Mediterranean pattern of eating, Nordic diet, Blue Zone diet, DASH, etc. A good visual is Canada's Food Guide:

A balanced diet should contain plenty of vegetables and fruit (your source of vitamins, minerals, fibre, antioxidants), good sources of protein (for muscle maintenance, maintain your immune function) and whole grains (great source for energy, fibre, prebiotics).

Let's break this down and see how you can easily incorporate these into your routine.

Vegetables and Fruit

How many vegetables and fruits should I have? The easiest suggestion I can give is to try to incorporate them to every meal and snack and you'll be getting enough. Here are some suggestions:

- a Add ½ cup of fruit (especially berries) to your breakfast.
- a Throw in a big handful of spinach into the pan first, wilt, season then throw in eggs for scrambled eggs with more pizzaz.
- a Like a breakfast sandwich? First, make it at home (more nutritious and economical) and consider adding veggies (mushrooms, pepper, spinach) to your eggs or have a layer of the veggies in the sandwich.
- a Smoothie for breakfast – great way to add veggies and fruit.
- a Add berries, cut up or grated apple or carrot, canned pumpkin to oatmeal along with spices.
- a Challenge yourself to add at least 4 vegetable toppings to your sandwich.
- a Soup is a great vehicle to add vegetables (even frozen mixed veggies work) this includes ready to serve canned or packaged soups like instant ramen.



Protein

As we age, we lose muscle and often eat less protein, which our bodies use to maintain muscle (which is important especially for those with Parkinson's). Protein is used much more effectively and efficiently in smaller amounts but more frequently throughout the day. When we eat excess protein, it doesn't get stored as muscle, instead it gets stored as fat (which we need) but we covet muscle more. I suggest you aim for 20 to 30 grams protein at each meal to meet requirements.

Most people eat the majority of their protein at dinner, but you could use your protein more effectively if we gave breakfast and lunch some protein love. Try these:

- a ½ cup of cottage cheese at breakfast or lunch will get you ~ 17 grams protein
- a Switch your regular yogurt to Greek or Icelandic yogurt (it has double the amount in the same volume – 4 g vs 8 g in 100 g container)
- a Oatmeal your go to in the morning? Cook it with cow's milk or soy milk as they are both high in protein. This makes your oatmeal more protein dense in the same volume.
- a Hemp hearts, chia seed, flax seed, pumpkin seeds or sunflowers seeds added to yogurt, oatmeal, cereal are all great ways to increase protein content of your meal choices
- a Have 2 or 3 eggs as a serving vs one (12-18 g vs 6 g protein)
- a If having a salad as a meal choice, make sure it has protein. Add leftover chicken, meat or fish from the night before. Add boiled eggs, canned fish, canned beans or lentils, cubed tofu to make it hearty. The addition of nuts and seeds are also great ways to add protein.
- a Peanut butter sandwich your go to? Make sure you have at least 2 tablespoons (8g protein) in a 2-slice sandwich. Consider your bread choice – the more nuts and seeds in the bread the higher the protein content. Consider a sprinkle of hemp hearts or chis seeds on top of the peanut butter to also increase protein content.



Whole Grains

Carbohydrates have gotten a bad rap for the last couple of years but not all carbohydrates are equal. Carbohydrates are used in your body as energy aka fuel. They are also an excellent source of fibre which is important for bowel regularity and used to feed healthy bacteria in your gut. Your healthiest options and best bet for balanced eating are to choose whole grains.

When you look at an ingredient list, you should see the words "whole grain whole ----:" For example to make sure your whole wheat bread is in fact a whole grain, you would see "whole grain whole wheat" listed not enriched or partially enriched (these aren't whole grains). Other examples of whole grains are rice including basmati, jasmine and brown, oats, farro, barley, quinoa, rye, etc.

Here are some suggestions to incorporate for more balanced eating.

- a Excellent bread choices would be made from whole grain whole wheat, whole grain whole rye, whole grain mixed nuts/seedy breads, breads made with rolled oats, quinoa.
- a Choose sourdough bread made from active cultures.
- a Try some other grains as a new side option. Think amaranth, millet, buckwheat & wild rice.
- a Try ancient wheat varieties like Einkorn, Emmer/Farro, Kamut® & spelt.
- a Choose 100% durum wheat pasta (more fibre and protein) as a good whole grain alternative to partially or enriched wheat.



So, if I eat a "balanced" diet do I need to take supplements? Are there certain vitamins that are recommended for people with Parkinson disease?

Generally, if you eat a variety of foods more frequently than most likely a supplement isn't necessary. The exception to this for people with Parkinson's is vitamin D and B12.

The amount of vitamin D found in foods is not adequate to meet needs. Taking at least 1000 IU/d of vitamin D every day (all year long) from a supplement ensures you are getting enough especially in our northern climate.

With B12, as we age, our body is unable to absorb vitamin B12 as well. Eating whole grains, as well as animal products like meat, fish, chicken, dairy is helpful, however when you are on a dopamine replacement medication you do not absorb enough vitamin B12. It is not a bad idea to have your doctor check levels or you can take 1000 mcg safely with no interaction seen with levodopa. Vitamin B12 supplements can be found in pill, sublingual, and spray options.

Is additional magnesium recommended? Is there enough in the food I eat? Does more magnesium help me sleep better?

Magnesium is a mineral which plays an important role in the body. It's part of building muscle and bone, regulating blood sugar, blood pressure, and muscle and nerve function. It also plays a role as an electrical conductor that contracts muscles and makes the heartbeat steadily. Magnesium may help regulate neurotransmitters that are directly related to sleep. You may be at risk for magnesium deficiency if you are;

- a An older adult
- a Have type 2 diabetes
- a Have a gastrointestinal disorder
- a Have an alcohol use disorder

If you eat a balanced diet, you are likely to get an adequate amount of magnesium. Good sources of magnesium are nuts, seeds, leafy greens, whole grains, beans, beef, salmon, poultry and dairy. If you decide to take a supplement, be mindful the safe maximum is no more than 350 mg per day and that magnesium can have a laxative effect at high doses. Speak to your doctor, pharmacist or dietitian to make sure you are on the correct dose.

Embrace eating balanced meals and your body and mind will be thankful.

PROGRAM NEWS & UPDATES

2024 Program Calendar!

Please take a look online at our full 2024 Program Calendar! The well-known favorites are still there, along with some new programs and options. Our programs and services are offered in-person, online via Zoom and via telephone so that no matter where you are, there is something for you.

Check out the Support Groups, as there have been changes to dates, times, frequency, and location of some of the groups. These changes were made to accommodate as many participants as possible, while also coordinating with the Client Services Team.

Speech Practice Group

We all know how important speech is, as we use it every day. The vocal chords are one of the muscles that those with Parkinson's should remember to exercise regularly. PAA received many requests, so this year we have decided to start an online drop-in speech practice group. Check the program calendar for the Zoom link.

WHAT'S NEW?



Important Dates to Remember

All PAA Offices will be closed on the following dates:

February 19
Family Day

March 29
Good Friday

April 1
Easter Monday

May 20
Victoria Day

May 25
Annual General Meeting

April 25
Last day to renew your membership for chance to vote at AGM



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FINDING INNER PEACE

Meditation & Parkinson's



Written By: Brienne Leclaire

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.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Benefits of Massage for Persons with Parkinson's and their Loved Ones



Written By:
Nicole Ouellette, RMT

Massage can be a great tool for relaxation, pain relief, easing muscle tension and more. But what, exactly, is massage therapy? According to the Cleveland Clinic, "Performed by a licensed massage therapist, massage therapy involves using different pressures, movements and techniques to manipulate muscles and other soft tissues in the body."

People with Parkinson's are subjected to the continuous trembling and contraction of their muscles, with virtually no opportunity to rest, relax, and/or recover. Because of this, some people with Parkinson's (and Care Partners!) have long recognized the benefits of massage therapy and have incorporated this option as a part of their health and wellness routine. Below, Registered Massage Therapist, Nicole Ouellette goes over some of the benefits of massage.

- Brandi La Bonte

Almost anyone can tell you that massage is relaxing and loosens tight muscles, however there are several physical and mental benefits that are not so widely known.



Swedish, or relaxation, massage therapy is known to decrease stress, anxiety, and depression, while creating a greater sense of wellbeing. Quality of sleep improves, as well as joint health and range of motion. Massage decreases pain and blood pressure, and improves circulation, digestion, and the elimination of waste and toxins. Blood flow to the brain is increased, muscles stiffness is reduced, and there can be improved mobility in some people. And frankly, massage just feels really, really good.

Researcher Dr. Tiffany Field at the National Institute of Health in Miami, Florida, has found that, with individuals with Parkinson's, "... sleep disturbances, pain, fatigue, anxiety and depressive symptoms have been demonstrated to be improved upon different massage techniques...", and "Massage therapy seems to induce relaxation in most cases..."

The Parkinson's Resource Organization states that "research has shown that massage can improve gait speed by 10%".

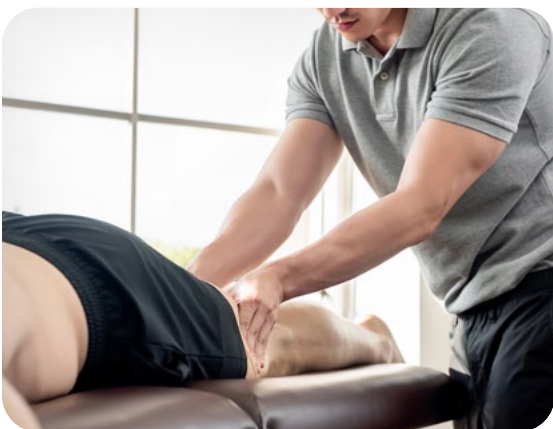
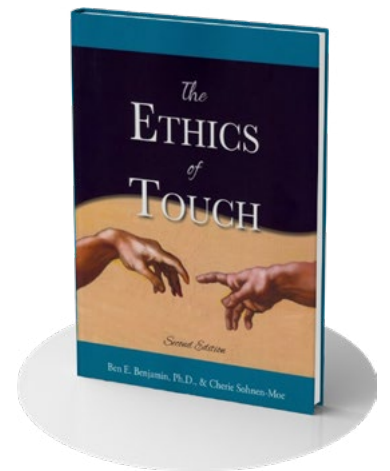
Let's not forget that alongside the Parkinson's sufferer, there is often also a primary caregiver, whether that be a spouse, a sibling, or an adult child. Stress, anxiety, frustration, and burnout are common occurrences among caregivers. Massage therapy offers the same wonderful benefits while resetting the heightened nervous system and promoting a more relaxed state.

Consider these statements from "The Ethics of Touch" by Ben E. Benjamin, Ph.D., and Cherie Sohmen-Moe, 2003.

"Touch is essential in infancy; it is vital in adulthood." p. 108.

"...receiving touch that is pleasurable, safe, and appropriate reduces sickness, depression..." p. 107.

"A parasympathetic nervous system response from being touched lowers blood pressure, increases digestion, slows breathing, and generally makes us feel more relaxed and at ease." p. 108.



The best treatment approach for achieving these amazing benefits is with full body Relaxation Massage. If you have never received massage before, it is important that you know that you are in charge of your treatment. Feel confident in requesting the pressure you prefer, the body areas you wish to be treated (and those that you don't), the type of music you'd prefer, and if you would like a silent or chatty session.

Adding regular massage therapy to your repertoire of modalities will undoubtedly enhance your overall physical and mental wellness.



TO THE POINT

Acupuncture & Parkinson's

Written By: Brienne Leclaire

Acupuncture, an ancient practice rooted in Traditional Chinese Medicine, has gained recognition as a complementary therapy that can offer benefits and symptom management to individuals with Parkinson disease. While further research is needed to fully understand the mechanisms by which acupuncture might benefit those with Parkinson's, the existing evidence and real-life success stories are promising. For individuals living with Parkinson's and their care partners, exploring acupuncture as a complementary therapy under the guidance of a trained acupuncturist may provide a valuable addition to their overall treatment plan. Let's explore how acupuncture works and the potential benefits it offers to people living with Parkinson's.

How Acupuncture Works

Acupuncture has been practiced for over two millennia and is deeply rooted in the philosophy of traditional Chinese medicine. The primary principle of acupuncture is the flow of vital energy or "Qi" (pronounced "chee") throughout the body. It is believed that any disruption in the flow of Qi can lead to imbalances and subsequent health issues. Acupuncture seeks to restore the balance by inserting thin, sterile needles at specific points on the body, known as acupuncture points or meridians. These points are believed to be interconnected, forming a network that regulates the flow of energy. By stimulating these points, acupuncture aims to

promote the body's natural ability to heal and regulate its internal processes. Acupuncture operates on the principle that stimulating these specific acupuncture points can improve the flow of energy and release the body's own natural painkillers, such as endorphins. Benefits are temporary and regular treatments are necessary to sustain them.

Western practitioners of acupuncture have alternate theories as to the mechanism of action of acupuncture. One theory is that the acupuncture leads to the release of endorphins, or brain chemicals that can trigger a sense of wellness. Another is that acupuncture reduces inflammation in the body.

The Benefits of Acupuncture in Relation to Parkinson disease



Symptom Management:

Acupuncture has been shown to help manage some of the symptoms of Parkinson's. Research indicates that regular acupuncture treatments may help reduce alleviate muscle stiffness and enhance motor coordination. By targeting specific acupuncture points, it may aid in relaxing the muscles and enhancing mobility.



Pain Relief:

Many people with Parkinson's suffer from pain due to their Parkinson's. This can be from muscle rigidity, nerve, joint, or other pain. Acupuncture's natural pain-relieving effects may provide welcome relief, making daily activities more manageable and enjoyable.



Stress Reduction:

Living with Parkinson's can be emotionally taxing; with symptoms also including anxiety and depression. Acupuncture is known for its calming and mood-enhancing effects by promoting the release of serotonin. Increasing serotonin can help reduce stress and anxiety and improve overall mental well-being.



Improved Sleep Quality:

Sleep disturbances are a common symptom of Parkinson's. While acupuncture cannot help with all sleep issues, it may be able to help with those sleep issues associated with restless leg syndrome, anxiety, or difficulty falling asleep/relaxing. Acupuncture's ability to promote relaxation and reduce discomfort can lead to improved sleep patterns, contributing to better overall health.



Enhanced Quality of Life:

The combination of pain relief, improved mobility, reduced stress, and better sleep quality contributes to an enhanced quality of life for individuals with Parkinson disease. Acupuncture can make day-to-day activities more manageable and enjoyable, providing a sense of empowerment and independence.

The Holistic Approach of Acupuncture

Acupuncture's holistic approach is one of its most significant strengths. Rather than simply targeting individual symptoms, acupuncture aims to address the root causes of ailments. For those with Parkinson disease, this can be particularly beneficial, as it can improve overall well-being, both physically and mentally.

There is on going research into the benefits of acupuncture for people with Parkinson's. Currently most data on acupuncture's benefits comes from small studies with no comparison groups, and results are mixed, some demonstrate benefit for acupuncture while others do not. It is crucial to emphasize that acupuncture should be seen as a complementary therapy alongside traditional medical treatments; not as a substitute for medications or other therapies recommended by healthcare professionals. A well-rounded treatment plan that includes prescribed medications, exercise, lifestyle adjustments, and complementary therapies such as acupuncture can offer a more integrative approach to managing Parkinson's symptoms.



FEEL THE RHYTHM

Music Therapy & Parkinson's



Written By:

Andrea Curry, MTA, CMT with contributions from Emma Torneiro

Do you recognize the following lyrics?



Where it began, I can't begin to know when but then I know it's growing strong. Was in the spring and spring became the summer. Who'd have believed you'd come along.



Did you guess Sweet Caroline by Neil Diamond? If you did, you're correct! Now that you know the song title, can you hear the beat of the chorus or remember the rest of the lyrics? Maybe you're thinking of a memory tied to that song or feeling cheerful? These reactions are brought upon by music, which has the ability to connect individuals. Music is a powerful tool to help with our wellbeing, including our physical and mental health. It can reduce anxiety and stress, elevate our moods, assist in pain management, improve quality of sleep, and assist with memory and cognition (NorthShore University Health System, 2020). For those living with Parkinson disease or Parkinson's Plus Syndromes, music can assist with balance, coordination, posture, vocal abilities, memory, and management of mood disorders. The following article, written by Andrea Curry, Certified Music Therapist (CMT) with JB Music Therapy, discusses the connection between Parkinson's and Music Therapy.

In recent years, music therapy has emerged as a transformative and powerful tool in the care and treatment of Parkinson disease. This therapeutic approach, leveraging the intricate blend of tempos, melodies, and rhythms, offers more than just emotional comfort; it has shown remarkable efficacy in alleviating physical symptoms and stabilizing mood fluctuations in individuals living with Parkinson disease.

What music therapists have identified is that the right music, played at the right time, assists the brain in appropriately producing or reducing various neurotransmitters crucial to human health and wellness. This includes dopamine, a key neurotransmitter whose levels decrease in Parkinson disease (PD). Music also activates mood-boosting and stabilizing neurotransmitters like serotonin, oxytocin, norepinephrine, and dopamine. Additionally, it is known to lower cortisol, a neurotransmitter responsible for anxiety.

To become a music therapist, one must complete a rigorous education followed by a comprehensive internship and a globally recognized exam, all regulated by the Canadian Association for Music Therapy (CAMT).

“Music therapy is a discipline in which Certified Music Therapists (MTAs) use music purposefully within therapeutic relationships to support development, health, and well-being. Music therapists use music safely and ethically to address human needs within cognitive, communicative, emotional, musical, physical, social, and spiritual domains.” – Canadian Association of Music Therapists

Music therapists use a combination of music-based and music-assisted therapy techniques, drawing upon extensive training and research. Numerous studies have revealed music's profound ability to activate several areas of the brain simultaneously, crucial for overall health and wellness. These interventions, which include gait training and pain management, support the motivation, mental health, and emotional well-being of patients and their support networks. Specific



rhythmic interventions target brain areas involved in timing, motion, attention, and reward. These can be tailored directly to a person to assist with gait and arm swing training. The Academy of Neurologic Music Therapy has developed some of these interventions, but music therapists also use other techniques to achieve these goals.

The University of Calgary is conducting trials and research on a new medical device that uses an iPod touch with somatic sensors and specifically tailored music to aid individuals with PD in their daily exercise and gait training. Clinicians overseeing the current trial report that the device is in a longer-term trial stage with five patients in Calgary. These patients are monitored monthly to adjust the settings and music preferences. The sensor integrated into the Ambulosono app is also being used to develop digital mobility charts, which are tools for interpreting data from mobility tests.

In current music therapy practice, music therapists apply various techniques to stimulate rhythmic movement, motivate patients, manage pain, and address symptoms of depression and anxiety. The research is ongoing and continually developing. As a music therapist currently working in hospitals and facilities around Calgary, I have witnessed firsthand the profound and direct impact of music on those dealing with this progressive disease.

References

Canadian Association of Music Therapists. (2023). *About Music Therapy*. <https://www.musictherapy.ca>

NorthShore University Health System. (2020, December 31). *9 Health Benefits of Music*. <https://www.northshore.org/healthy-you/9-health-benefits-of-music/>





RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

The impact of multicomponent integrated exercise program on motor and non-motor symptoms in Parkinson's disease

We want to hear from you!!

In collaboration with the Parkinson Association of Alberta, our team of researchers at the University of Alberta would like to hear about your experiences with the multicomponent exercise program at the Parkinson Association of Alberta. If you or someone you know has Parkinson's disease and is 55 years or older, or if you are a care partner, we would love to hear from you!

Your stories are invaluable. We want to know what challenges you have faced in joining the exercise program, what keeps you motivated, and whether you have noticed any changes in your symptoms or overall day-to-day activities. Each person's journey with Parkinson's is unique and together we can make a difference!

Who is eligible to participate?

- » Individuals who have Parkinson's disease, are 55 years of age or older.
- » Those who are a care-partner of a person with Parkinson's disease.
- » Those who have participated or are currently participating in the Parkinson Association of Alberta exercise program.

How does it work?

Step 1: Share your experiences in a 5-7-minute healthcare utilization survey.

Step 2: We will contact you to complete self-reported questionnaires on non-motor symptoms, quality of life, and freezing of gait.

Step 3: We are looking to interview 24 individuals with Parkinson's and their care partners to dive deeper into the challenges and benefits of the program. Interested? Let us know!

Compensation:

- » Complete Steps 1 and 2 to receive \$25.
- » Participate in the interviews (Step 3) and get an additional \$25.

Got questions or want to sign up? Feel free to contact Aiza Khan at 780-802-7599 (aiza4@ualberta.ca) or Dr. Victor Ezeugwu at 780-492-5108 (ezeugwu@ualberta.ca).

Your story matters, and we can't wait to hear it!



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