



STEP BY STEP

A community walking
program for people
with Parkinson's



Parkinson Society
British Columbia

Program Contact Information

Walking Leader: _____

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Step by Step is a program organized by Parkinson Society British Columbia (PSBC) and adapted with permission from the American Parkinson Disease Association, Wisconsin Chapter. It is made possible by the generous contributions of our donors. For questions about Step by Step and related programming and services, please contact:

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You are not alone. We are here to help.

What is Step by Step?

Step by Step is a 12-week walking program aimed at incrementally improving the number of average daily steps an individual takes. The first week will determine each walker's baseline, and then each week they will be encouraged to increase their steps based on a personal goal. While participants are encouraged to walk and track their own steps, a community group leader will organize a weekly walk allowing walkers to meet, socialize and help support one another.

The goal of this program is to help motivate people to become physically fit to combat the symptoms of Parkinson's disease. We hope to encourage people to continue a regular exercise routine following the program.

How do I get started?

For beginners who are concerned about their motivation or ability to walk far, we recommend a "500 steps out, 500 steps back" plan. Just like it sounds, you walk out for 500 steps, turn around, and walk back. If you feel ambitious, you can start with "1,000 steps out, 1,000 steps back", and off you go for the day! Increase by 500 to 1000 steps per week and before you know it you'll be up to 10,000 steps! The recommended daily steps for an average healthy individual is 10,000.

Where can I walk?

The beauty of walking is that it can be done anywhere. Here are some suggestions:

- Around your block
- Your weekly group walk
- Mall walking is great for cold or rainy conditions.
- Safe trails in your local park
- Walking to and from errands
- When you travel (a great way to explore a new city)
- Check out local walks for causes in your area
- Walk your dog!

Planning your walks

We recommend setting a weekly plan for walking if you struggle with motivation or sticking with it. Planning increases compliance. Write down the day(s) of the week you'll walk, the time of day, how many minutes, and where you'll do it (location). Set and review your weekly plan every week for the three months.

STEP BY STEP - RECORD SHEET

PARTICIPANT NAME

WEEK 1 AVERAGE DAILY STEPS

WEEK 12 AVERAGE DAILY STEPS

How to calculate your Average Daily Steps (ADS): Add together the number of steps you've taken in the week by totaling Day 1 through Day 7. Add this total to the "Weekly Total" column, and then divide the number by 7. Once you've divided your Weekly Total by 7, you have what is called your Average Daily Steps (ADS), and this can be written in the "Average Daily Steps" column. This is the number that you want to see improve over the course of the program based on the goal you have set for yourself.

| Week | Weekly Goal | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Weekly Total | Average Daily Steps (Weekly Total / 7) |
|---------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|---|
| Week 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Week 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Week 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Week 4 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Week 5 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Week 6 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Week 7 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Week 8 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Week 9 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Week 10 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Week 11 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Week 12 | | | | | | | | | | |

How do I set a personal goal?

Start by setting a goal that you are comfortable with and see as challenging. As each participant in the program is unique, so should be your goal. One of the easiest ways to set a goal is to pick a percentage to increase your steps by over the duration of the program. From there, work backwards and determine how many extra steps you need to take each week to gradually meet your goal.

Ten tips for fitness walking

Walking is one of the easiest and least expensive ways to stay physically fit. It's also a versatile form of exercise that can be done indoors or outdoors, and you can tailor the intensity of your exercise. These tips can help you get the most from your workout.

1. Before starting, check with your doctor if you have a chronic medical condition or if you have had a recent injury. But don't assume that you aren't able to start walking if you do have medical issues. Various forms of exercise can help control PD progression and symptoms.
2. Invest in good shoes. Since these are the only expense and equipment you'll need, pay attention to the fit and quality of your shoes. Shoes should have good arch support and a slightly elevated stiff heel to prevent wobbling.
3. Always warm up by walking at a slow or normal walking pace for five minutes before picking up the tempo of your workout.
4. Pay attention to your heart rate and breathing. Walk at a pace that challenges you and elevates your heart rate, but don't overdo it. You should be able to talk and carry on a conversation while you are exercising; if you can't, you may be working too hard.
5. Use good walking posture. Swing your arms. Keep your head up, back straight and abdomen flat.
6. Use a pedometer to track the distance you've walked or the number of steps you've taken. Watching your improvement over time is great motivation.
7. Be sure to carry water if you're walking long distances or are exercising in hot weather.
8. In the heat of summer, don't forget to wear a hat with a brim and to apply sunscreen to exposed areas.
9. Vary your route if you're getting bored. Alternate routes on different days of the week. Many people walk with a buddy or in groups for support and motivation.
10. To increase your fitness, add a route with some hills or changes in terrain.

Balance and falling

- Use a cane with a large base or walker with brakes. Poles are also very helpful! Get professional advice before you make a major purchase.
- When walking, stand as straight as you can and walk with your feet a little wider apart than normal.
- Wear comfortable shoes with good arch supports. If you shuffle, avoid shoes with rubber or crepe soles.
- Consult a physiotherapist. A therapist can assess your overall safety and mobility and also teach you and your partner what to do if you fall.

Walking & Parkinson's disease

With Parkinson's disease (PD), walking can become an effort. In fact, you may have noticed one foot dragging when you walk as one of your first symptoms of the disease.

PD can cause your muscles to cramp if you get overtired or if you not receiving adequate medication. As the disease progresses, you may have problems with balance and posture which, in turn, can affect your centre of gravity. You might walk with a shuffle or, alternatively, you may find that you begin walking normally but progress to shorter faster steps until you are almost running on the balls of your feet. Any problem with walking has the potential for causing a fall. Here are a few suggestions for improving your walking capabilities and your safety:

- Know your limits but try to walk every day. Start with a 10-minute walk, gradually building to 30 minutes.
- Walk when you feel rested and when your drugs are most effective.
- Concentrate on a good stride and arm swing. This may require you to walk with no conversation to interrupt you.
- Pay careful attention to changes in ground surfaces (e.g. curb to pavement or carpet to bare floor).
- Turn with small steps rather than pivoting on one foot.
- If you have significant difficulty with walking, use a wheelchair for longer excursions (e.g. shopping malls, garden centres, airports, etc.). By helping you to conserve precious energy, a wheelchair can actually give you more freedom.



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