

WALKING

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

PD can cause muscles to cramp when you are tired, or 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 may walk with a shuffle, or find that you can begin to walk normally, but progress to shorter and faster steps, until almost running on the balls of your feet. Any walking problems can be a fall risk. Here are a few suggestions for improving your walking, and your safety:

- Try to walk every day, but know your limits. Start with a 10-minute walk, gradually building to 30 minutes.
- Walk when you are feeling rested, and when your medications are most effective.
- Concentrate on a good stride and arm swing. This may require you to walk with no conversation to distract you.
- To maintain balance, 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.
- Pay careful attention to changes in ground surfaces, such as 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. By helping you conserve energy, a wheelchair can provide you with more freedom.

Additional Resources

Balance and Falling Helpsheet | bit.ly/pdbalanceandfalling

Freezing Helpsheet | bit.ly/pdfreezing

In-Home Safety Check Helpsheet | bit.ly/pdhomesafetycheck

Stay on Your Feet Booklet | bit.ly/pdstayonyourfeet

Source

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