

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Bollywood Dance** | Thursdays, January 11, 18, 25 & February 1
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/bollywoodjan-23>
- **SongShine with Joani** | Thursdays, January 11, 18, 25, and February 1, 8 & 15
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/songshinejanfeb-24>
- **Virtual Open House** | Wednesday, January 24
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/openhouse-24>
- **Forming New Connections: PD Dating and Friendships** | Monday, February 5
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/newconnections-24>
- **Move with Martial Arts: Karate Fundamentals** | Tuesdays, February 6, 13, 20 & 27
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/martialartsfeb-23>
- **Communication and Swallow Workshop (Abbotsford)** | Saturday, February 10
Learn more & register: <https://www.parkinson.bc.ca/commswall-ab24>

For a full list of our upcoming events, visit www.parkinson.bc.ca/events/education-events/

UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Donate a Car Canada

[Donate a Car Canada](#) accepts vehicle donations for Parkinson Society British Columbia (PSBC)! Free towing is provided in most areas across Canada. When you donate your car, truck, RV, boat, or motorcycle to PSBC through Donate A Car Canada, it will either be recycled or sold at auction (depending on its condition, age, and location). After your vehicle donation is complete, PSBC will send you a tax receipt and will put your gift to good use.

Brighten the day with a bouquet from Callia Flowers

For a limited time, [Callia Flowers](#) is offering Parkinson Society BC's (PSBC) community members a \$5 discount on any order they place using the code: **PARKINSONBC**. With every order placed using the custom code, Callia will donate 10% of the net sales to the Society. Join us in making a meaningful impact in our community and spread the love with Callia Flowers today!

We are looking for more Champions!

Do you want to help fund research, grow support networks, and improve the quality of life for those living with Parkinson's disease (PD)? Become a Champion for Parkinson's and plan your own independent community fundraising event! Contact us at events@parkinson.bc.ca or 1-800-668-3330.

TIP JAR

The Tip Jar is where we share advice from Parkinson's community members on a wide range of topics from daily lifestyle hacks to safety. This month we share a tip on navigating computers:

Consider using a Stream Deck device to simplify computer navigation if you're facing challenges due to Parkinson's symptoms. The device features approximately 15 customizable spaces, each accommodating icons for your frequently used programs and websites. In moments of difficulty, such as during tremors, a quick tap on the corresponding icon effortlessly directs you to the desired program or website, streamlining your computer usage experience.

Do you have any tips or tricks that you would like to share with the Parkinson's community? These can be tips from something that works well, to eating and dressing, to getting out of bed or travelling! All tips and tricks are welcome! Please share your ideas at info@parkinson.bc.ca.

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS***Seeking Support Group Facilitators***

Parkinson Society British Columbia is currently seeking volunteer support group facilitators for Abbotsford (in-person), Tri-Cities/Coquitlam Caregivers (in-person), and West Kelowna (in-person). If you're interested in starting your own support group in your area, please don't hesitate to [contact us](#). [[learn more](#)]

Join PSBC's Book Club!

PSBC's Book Club is a social club for like-minded people who have PD, or carepartners of those with PD, to meet and discuss books that are selected by the peer committee or group members.

The group meets at 11:30 am on the first Thursday of each month. If you are interested in joining this virtual, peer-led book club, please contact [Kelly Felgenhauer](#).

DISCUSSION TOPIC: Freezing

Discussion Questions

1. How do freezing episodes impact daily life? What are the main challenges?
2. Are there identifiable patterns or triggers in your freezing episodes? How does that influence your approach to managing the episodes?
3. In managing freezing, what strategies have you found most effective for yourself or your loved one?
4. What are the best ways a caregiver/carepartner or friends and family can support their loved one experiencing freezing?

Individuals with Parkinson's disease (PwP) may experience what is commonly known as "freezing" or "frozen gait." This phenomenon refers to a temporary inability to initiate movement, often likened to the sensation of feet being stuck or magnetized to the ground. These instances can last from a few seconds to several minutes, frequently manifesting during tasks such as navigating through confined spaces or initiating purposeful movements like standing up from a chair or walking. Speech may also be affected, leading to difficulties in both starting and abruptly halting sentences. These episodes often coincide with impaired balance, posing a potential hazard for falls. Given their unpredictable nature, freezing episodes can induce anxiety, as they disrupt automatic motor skills (Parkinson's Europe, 2020).

What causes freezing?

It's crucial to recognize that while not everyone with Parkinson's experiences freezing episodes, this symptom is prevalent in 30-67% of diagnosed individuals, with a higher incidence observed in later stages of the disease (Forsaa et al., 2015). Much like other motor symptoms associated with Parkinson's disease (e.g., slowness, muscle stiffness, and tremor), gait alterations and

freezing result from the loss of control in brain regions responsible for producing smooth and purposeful movements (Giladi & Nieuwboer, 2008).

Individuals may exhibit unique freezing patterns, commonly observed during specific instances:

- **Gait initiation:** Episodes can be triggered when preparing to take the first step after a period of rest (Parkinson's Foundation, n.d.).
- **During walking:** Freezing tends to occur when navigating through particularly challenging spaces like door frames, entering an elevator or escalator, or making directional turns (Spildooren et al., 2010).
- **In anxiety-provoking situations:** Freezing episodes often coincide with heightened stress or anxious moments (Pimenta et al., 2019).
- **During multitasking:** The demands of attempting multiple tasks simultaneously can trigger freezing episodes (Spildooren et al., 2010).
- **Possibly linked to medication effects:** Freezing may, in some cases, be associated with the impact of medications prescribed for managing motor symptoms (Parkinson's Foundation, n.d.).

Understanding these triggers and patterns is pivotal for effectively managing this symptom, thereby enhancing overall safety and quality of life. By identifying specific situations that commonly lead to freezing, individuals and caregivers can proactively implement strategies to mitigate the impact of these episodes on daily activities and mobility, ensuring increased confidence and security.

Treatment and Management

Navigating the challenges of freezing episodes in Parkinson's disease requires a multifaceted approach tailored to each individual's unique needs. Consultation with a healthcare professional is crucial in determining the most effective treatment strategy. In this pursuit, various avenues, ranging from medication adjustments to specialized therapies, offer hope in managing and

mitigating the impact of freezing episodes, aiming to improve both the severity and frequency. Here are some avenues to explore:

Medication

If freezing tends to occur during 'off' periods, discussing changes to the type and timing of your medication with your doctor may reduce the frequency of these episodes. Ensure open communication with your healthcare provider about any proposed adjustments to your medication regimen.

However, if freezing happens during 'on' periods or is unrelated to the transition between 'on' and 'off' periods, standard Parkinson's medications or alterations to their dosage and timing may not yield optimal results (Parkinson's Europe, 2020). In such cases, alternative approaches become essential.

Occupational Therapy

An occupational therapist is a health professional who can help maximize your independence. They assess your daily activities and offer advice on making your home or workplace safer and more manageable. From suggesting easier ways to perform tasks to recommending aids or equipment, occupational therapists play a key role. They can also help you find ways to manage during a freezing episode (Giladi & Nieuwboer, 2008). If you have difficulties organising day-to-day life, or feel very anxious, an occupational therapist can help you learn techniques to manage these concerns.

Physiotherapist

A physiotherapist can be instrumental in teaching techniques to prevent freezing and recommending compensation strategies if it does occur. Footwear and walking aids are crucial considerations, with physiotherapists offering advice on the most suitable options to minimize

the risk of freezing. Given Parkinson's impact on posture and balance, physiotherapists can suggest exercises to enhance these aspects, reducing the likelihood of forward falls during freezing episodes. Additionally, they focus on multitasking techniques, particularly important in unfamiliar or crowded settings, helping individuals maintain control over their movements (Parkinson's Foundation, n.d.).

By exploring these avenues and collaborating with healthcare professionals, individuals with Parkinson's can develop personalized strategies to manage freezing effectively, enhancing their overall quality of life and independence.

Parkinson Society British Columbia offers free virtual physiotherapy services for those that meet certain criteria limiting access to Parkinson's-specific care. For more information, contact PSBC at info@parkinson.bc.ca.

Practical Self-Management Strategies for Managing Freezing

Numerous self-management strategies empower individuals and their caregivers to effectively navigate freezing episodes, recognizing the personalized nature of these approaches. It is crucial to emphasize that these strategies may vary among individuals, highlighting the importance of finding the approach that works best for you. Always consult with a healthcare professional before implementing new interventions.

- **Cueing Techniques:** Harness the power of external cues, such as rhythmic auditory stimulation or visual cues, to overcome freezing episodes. Walk to the beat of a metronome or strategically place visual markers on the floor to establish a steady rhythm, facilitating smoother movements (Rochester et al., 2007).
- **Environmental Modifications:** Take charge of creating a safer and more supportive living space by making adjustments to your home environment. This includes removing obstacles, installing handrails, and ensuring proper lighting to diminish the risk of freezing incidents.

- **Balance and Strengthening Exercises:** Integrate regular balance and strengthening exercises into your routine to significantly contribute to managing freezing episodes (Giladi & Nieuwboer, 2008). Tailor these exercises to your abilities to enhance muscle strength and coordination, promoting better overall stability.
- **Dual-Task Training:** Challenge yourself with activities that require simultaneous cognitive and motor engagement to improve your ability to manage freezing. Practice tasks that involve both physical movement and cognitive focus, such as counting while walking, to help you maintain better control over your movements (Spildooren et al., 2010).
- **Mindfulness and Stress Reduction Techniques:** Embrace mindfulness meditation and stress reduction exercises as tools to positively impact freezing episodes. Learning to manage stress levels can contribute to an improved overall sense of well-being and enhance your ability to navigate challenging situations (Pimenta et al., 2019).
- **Footwear Considerations:** Pay attention to your footwear choices as a critical aspect of minimizing the risk of freezing episodes. Opt for footwear with good traction and proper support to enhance stability, reducing the likelihood of slips or falls.

By adopting a proactive self-management approach that incorporates these practical strategies, individuals and caregivers can confidently address freezing episodes, fostering a safer and more fulfilling daily life.

How Can a Caregiver/Loved One Help?

Recognizing the varied nature of freezing episodes, caregivers and loved ones can play a pivotal role in navigating these challenges. From promoting a calm environment to employing specific physical cues, the following strategies aim to provide a multifaceted support system tailored to the unique needs of individuals with PD.

- **Remain calm:** Maintaining a composed and patient is important when assisting someone experiencing a freezing episode. Take a moment to assess the situation and wait as these episodes can sometimes pass on their own.

- **Avoid pushing:** Refrain from the urge to hurry or push the individual during a freezing episode, as doing so may intensify tension and worsen the situation.
- **Try a supportive approach:** If the person finds it challenging to move independently, consider a supportive approach. Position your foot perpendicular to theirs and encourage them to step over it, providing a visual and tactile cue that may facilitate movement.
- **Suggest calming techniques:** Encourage deep breathing or engaging in activities like marching or counting, aligning with the strategies mentioned earlier. This not only offers a potential distraction but also aids in regaining control over their movements.
- **Initiate a gentle rocking motion:** If the individual remains frozen, introduce gentle rocking motions from side to side. This subtle movement can sometimes serve to break the "freeze" and assist in initiating forward movement. Be attentive to their response, ensuring the rocking is done with sensitivity and within the comfort level of the individual (Parkinson's Foundation, n.d.).

Freezing in Parkinson's disease poses significant challenges for both individuals with the condition and their caregivers. However, by understanding the neurological basis of freezing, identifying triggers, and implementing tailored management strategies, it is possible to enhance mobility and quality of life. Ongoing research and emerging therapies offer hope for continued advancements in the field, bringing us closer to more effective treatments for freezing and other Parkinson's symptoms.

Additional Resources

- Freezing [[helpsheet](#)]
- Thawing Out: Strategies to Reduce Freezing | Shelly Yu [[view video](#)] [[view slides](#)]
- Exercises for Freezing [[view playlist](#)]

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