

# Managing Parkinson's

Based on our personal experiences of living with Parkinson's, **Move4Parkinson's** have developed the **Five Elements Brief Guide To Managing Parkinson's** for achieving an improved quality of life. Each element outlined below can be addressed individually, or combined for even greater effect.

## Do you know ...?

### 1. Medication Awareness & Medical Support

- ▶ What medication you are taking?
- ▶ Why you are taking it?
- ▶ What it is supposed to do?
- ▶ When to take it?
- ▶ How to take it?
- ▶ What the possible side effects are?

### 2. Nutrition

- ▶ How food may interact with your medication?
- ▶ Which foods are right for you?
- ▶ Why staying hydrated is important?

### 3. Exercise

- ▶ Why regular exercise is good for you?
- ▶ Which exercises can benefit you?
- ▶ How much exercise you should do?

### 4. Emotional Well-Being

- ▶ What psychological effects are possible?
- ▶ How they can affect you?
- ▶ What you can do about them?

### 5. Optional Treatments

- ▶ What optional treatments are?
- ▶ Which ones are right for you?
- ▶ How they can benefit you?

For more information please see inside.

Find out more about the **Five Elements** and Parkinson's on our website at [www.move4parkinsons.com/5elements](http://www.move4parkinsons.com/5elements). We have provided links to what we believe are the most informative resources in each area. We will continue to update and adapt this information as research evolves and we uncover other sources of support.



# Five Elements

Brief Guide To Managing Parkinson's

- Medication Awareness ▶
- & Medical Support
- Nutrition ▶
- Exercise ▶
- Emotional Well-Being ▶
- Optional Treatments ▶



## Your Choices



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## Move4Parkinson's

# Five Elements

## Brief Guide To Managing Parkinson's

"Once you choose hope, anything's possible"

- Christopher Reeve -

Move4Parkinson's encourages People with Parkinson's (PWP's) to explore the Five Elements, in order to gain insights into ways in which you can manage your illness. We suggest starting with Medication Awareness & Medical Support. Please then look at the remaining elements and choose one or more that can help improve your quality of life based on your specific needs. Each of us is unique, so it is important to remember that there is no "one size fits all" solution. We encourage you to try different elements and select the ones which work for you.

### Medication Awareness & Medical Support

The **first step in any self management** process should be to discuss with your neurologist what the right medication for you is and how and when to take it. Your medication needs will evolve over time so it is important they are monitored and reviewed properly by your neurologist.

Once you are confident you are taking the correct medication, the following are important:

- ▶ **Understanding your medication.** Learning how your medication works is beneficial but more important is understanding what your medication is supposed to do for you. That way, you will be better equipped to notice any changes and/or improvements in your condition.
- ▶ **Read the instructions that come with your medication,** in particular noting any specific requirements relating to meals, water and the time at which it should be taken.
- ▶ **Be aware of potential side effects of Parkinson's medication.** Ensure you read the information leaflet to make yourself aware of these, which may be physical and / or psychological. If you notice any changes in your sleep pattern, mood or behaviour, please consult your neurologist immediately, as these "non-motor factors" could stem from taking your medication.

### Nutrition

There is no special "Parkinson's Diet", however learning the benefits of certain foods can improve your overall health.

▶ **Be aware of food and medication interactions.** What you eat and when you eat can impact the effectiveness of your medication. Please review any information provided with your medication on foods to avoid. Consider keeping a food diary of what you eat and when you eat it, along with how you feel afterwards as this will help in monitoring any changes in your condition.

▶ **Stay hydrated.** It is important that you drink an adequate amount of water on a daily basis, as dehydration is one of the top ten causes of sudden deterioration of PWP's.

▶ **Alcohol intake.** Carefully follow any alcohol consumption guidelines on your medication information leaflet for optimum health.

If you are considering making changes to your diet, please seek advice from your neurologist or a nutritionist first.

### Exercise

A lack of dopamine in the body is the fundamental problem for PWP's. Studies<sup>1</sup> have shown that while exercising may not increase the level of dopamine, it can make your brain use the dopamine you have more efficiently.

▶ **Regular exercise** can help to improve some of the symptoms of Parkinson's such as slowness of movement, rigidity and balance. It can be a vital tool in potentially slowing down the progression of this condition.

▶ **Physical benefits of regular exercise** for PWP's can include: improved balance and posture, increased muscle strength and flexibility.

No matter what type of exercise you do, it is important to stay active. If you would like to start exercising, please speak to your neurologist or a chartered physiotherapist first.

<sup>1</sup><http://jnm.snmjournals.org/content/41/8/1352.short>  
<http://www.jneurosci.org/content/27/20/5291.full>

### Emotional Well-Being

Taking care of your emotional well-being (mental health) is a vital part of managing your Parkinson's.

▶ **Be aware of changes in mood/behaviour.** Apathy and depression are two known non-motor Parkinson's symptoms. Others include anxiety, sleep disturbances and

impulse behavioural problems. While these do not affect every PWP, if you experience any of these, please speak to your neurologist or PD nurse.

▶ **Mindfulness based therapies** are a way in which PWP's can support their emotional well-being. Examples include breathing techniques, meditation, guided visualisations and relaxation techniques. Mindfulness involves "living in the moment" by giving your full attention to whatever you are doing at a particular time.

Some PWP's (including those at Move4Parkinson's) have found these techniques useful in managing their symptoms. They can help the body elicit a relaxation response, which in turn can reduce stress. The less stressed you are, the better you will feel.

### Optional Treatments

These include any interventions that can support your general well-being in addition to taking your medication.

▶ **Occupational and/or Speech therapy** can help PWP's with daily tasks such as writing, household chores and speech if these are affected for you.

▶ **Complementary therapies** focus on the body as a whole and the interactions between the body and mind. From acupuncture to yoga, we recommend trying different complementary therapies to find out what works for you. These therapies can have many benefits for the individual, so it is important to find one that you're comfortable with and enjoy doing.

If you are thinking of trying any optional treatment, please discuss this with your neurologist or PD nurse first as some treatments may not be suitable for you.