

Strength Training:

The basics:

It is recommended that all people, including those with Parkinson's disease (PD), perform regular strength training 2-3 days/week at moderate to high intensity. Changes in your muscles can occur with aging and these can begin as early as the 3rd or 4th decade of life. Progressive strength training has been shown to improve and maintain UPDRS (PD disease severity score done by neurologist) over 2 years. Progressive muscle strengthening can improve muscle mass, strength and power. This can lead to better function at all ages!

Consider:

When starting a new exercise routine, you should work with your physician or physical therapist about any pain or other medical condition to verify that it is safe for you to exercise. You should also work with your physician if you have any dizziness, chest pain, difficulty breathing or other concerning signs. You should also contact your provider if you notice changes in your walking or balance that could affect your safety.

Warm up: Warm up time varies from 3-15 minutes. Consider moving your joints through the motions you will do for strength training without weights. This will help to increase blood flow to tissues and prepare for exercise.

Training parameters:

- How often? 2-3 days/week
- How many repetitions? 2-3 sets of 8-12 repetitions
- How hard do I work? Moderate to High Intensity. See below for more details.

How to strengthen: Target large muscle groups of the arms, legs and trunk. Perform each repetition with attention to proper form. Consider using machines, resistance bands, free weights or body weights. For specific details on how to target muscle, speak with your physical therapist or fitness trainer.

How to progress training: Once the current weight becomes easy, add weight (1-5#) so it becomes harder but you are still able to complete the goal of 2-3 sets of 8-12 repetitions.

Cool Down: Cool down for 10 minutes, consider doing a stretching program at this point in your work out.



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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

How to I measure intensity?

You can work with a skilled professional to determine the appropriate weight or level of resistance training. There are many strategies that these individuals will use to find the right weight. One strategy is utilizing the 1 Repetition Max or Predicted 1 Repetition Max tests. In these tests, we attempt to determine the appropriate load for the individual based on the maximal amount one can lift with proper form. This ensure that each individual is truly providing adequate loading to the muscle.

Take Home: You should be challenged by the weight that you are lifting. By the 8-10th repetition, you should feel muscle fatigue and need to stop for a rest. If you feel you could continue lifting for >20 repetitions, the load is likely too light and you should consider increasing by 1-5#.

Remember: Your physical therapist and/or fitness trainer are there to support you. Reach out if you have questions to reduce the risk of injury.

Will it hurt when I do strength training?

You are likely to feel a little muscle soreness, this is called “delayed-onset muscle soreness” and occurs when you increase the intensity of your workout, and when you progress the weights. A little soreness is okay. If it is very bothersome or is feels more like pain than discomfort, please follow up with your therapist or trainer I to see if adjustments need to be made.



Return to PT: It is recommended that you see your physical therapist for regular check-ins every 6-12 months to monitor and progress your exercise. If a change occurs in your walking, balance, or fatigue with exercise, you can reach out to your PT sooner by calling 312-238-1000 to reconnect.

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