

Living with Parkinson's Disease

Parkinson's may change many areas of your everyday life. **Occupational therapists** have the expertise to help you adapt to these changes. They will help you to get the most out of life by helping you to continue with activities that are important to you.

Your occupational therapist will strive to maintain your level of independence in all areas of your life, for as long as possible. You can get advice about everyday activities, such as:

Looking after yourself— washing, grooming, dressing and eating.

Working- working both inside your home (cooking, cleaning, etc.) and outside (employment).

Leisure — reading, writing letters, gardening (or whatever you enjoy doing as a hobby, or for relaxation).

In this leaflet, there are some general tips which may help. However^ if you experience difficulty completing everyday tasks please contact an Occupational Therapist. You will be assessed individually, and given advice on how to adapt tasks and your surroundings to suit you.

Looking after Yourself

Some of these tips may help:

Washing Use 'soap on a rope' (available in most chemists), liquid soap or a sponge with a long handle.

Grooming Use a long-handled hairbrush, electric razor.

Dressing If your balance is affected, you may find it easier to get dressed while sitting in a chair with armrests. Wear clothes that are easier to manage, such as T-shirts and jumpers rather than shirts, blouses or cardigans with buttons and hooks. Wear shoes with Velcro or elastic shoelaces.

Feeding Use both hands to lift a glass or cup, keeping your arms close to your body. Use your elbow as a pivot to raise a fork from a plate to your mouth. A large selection of adapted cutlery, plates and cups is available.

Moving around the House The correct height and design of bed and chair can help enormously.

Your occupational therapist can advise you if necessary about where to position rails by your toilet, stairs and steps. (Refer to safety in the home.)

Working and Leisure

It is important to be as independent as possible. You may find adapted equipment and gadgets helpful. A healthy diet and regular exercise will help to relax you, reduce stress and allow you to enjoy your leisure activities.

(Refer to relevant sections in this series.)

Writing - Difficulty with handwriting can be one of the first symptoms of Parkinson's. People with Parkinson's often find that when they start writing the handwriting is of normal size but as they continue, it becomes smaller and smaller (micrographia). Your occupational therapist can give you practical advice on all aspects of handwriting.

Practical Solutions:

- Try a thick or padded pen or pencil, or felt tip pen, to make writing easier for you.
- Try a weighted cuff around your wrist, to help dampen down the tremor.
- Use a clip-board or a non-slip mat to prevent the paper moving.
- After writing a line, stop, relax, breath deeply, stretch (using wide arm movements), push down through the arms and then start writing again.
- Electronic typewriters, word processors and computers can be very useful.
- Use a dictaphone or tape recorder for your messages.

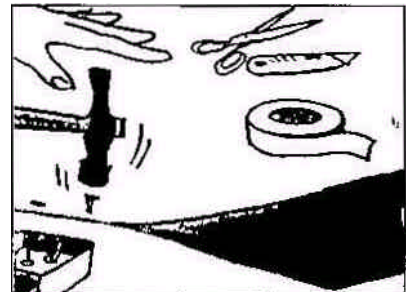
Safety in the home

1. Take regular exercise, even if this is only a short walk, to keep muscles strong and joints supple.
2. Fit handrails that are easy to grip on both sides of the stairs. Climb the stairs as little as possible, if you do not feel safe.
3. Keep the stairs and living areas well lit. Use 100 watt bulbs. Keep a torch by the bed.
4. Never leave anything lying around that may trip you up especially on the stairs 3.2-27.



-sliprubber mats in the bath 3. shower. (Fit handrails near the) Tj -78.25 -11.25 TD 0.191

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If you require an individual assessment regarding your ability to complete activities of daily living independently, please consult your doctor for a referral.