

PEP NEWS

JANUARY 2023

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NO JANUARY MEETING

FROM DAVID BRANDT—As we begin a new year, there is optimism in the Parkinson's community. Millions of dollars have been provided for research by organizations such as Michael J Fox Foundation, Parkinson's Foundation, Cure for Parkinson, American Parkinson Disease Association, Parkinson Alliance, Davis Phinney Foundation and the NIH among others. Experts say the Parkinson's disease field aims to develop therapies that can slow or stop disease progression. There are several promising gene therapy and stem cell therapy approaches that are entering the early stages of clinical development. We are finding out more about the gut and PD

We continually get updates on how exercise including pedaling, yoga, dancing, boxing, and walking among others can assist in delaying the disease. We are learning more on how our diets can be improved to help combat the effects of PD. Deep brain stimulation and alternatives continue to get better. We are getting better at ways to assist care partners. There are drug trials aimed at dyskinesia and cognitive impairment.

The above are just some of the reasons that patients with PD have many reasons to be hopeful—from cutting edge research to better education that can help you stay in charge, those with PD are living longer and better.

I wanted to take a moment to give a big thank you to the Laretta K and Richard P Peters Foundation as well as the Ohio Parkinson Foundation Northeast Region for their annual grants to PEP which helps us continue to send out this newsletter every month! Happy New Year to Everyone!!!

How to Improve Gait in PD

(Excerpt from Brain & Life)

Most evenings, Mark Mason can be seen out walking under a lush canopy of live oaks in his Gainesville, FL, neighborhood, using poles that allow him to stay upright and move smoothly and with confidence. Poles are often used by hikers and speed walkers to navigate hilly or rocky terrain, but for Mason, a 72-year-old retired NASA computer scientist with Parkinson's disease, they serve a different purpose: They enable him to walk two to three miles most days of the week—something he couldn't do otherwise. "They help me increase my stride and walk more upright," he says. "Without them, I'd curl inward and shuffle."

And walking outside is more enjoyable than getting on a treadmill in a gym, Mason says. "It gets me out in nature, which is uplifting and beautiful and soul-cleansing."

Anna Grill, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease 14 years ago, uses a different tactic to get going. She experiences freezing, a sensation that makes her

feel as if her feet are stuck to the floor. "It usually happens when I'm forced to stop short, say, in a crowded mall," says the 52-year-old resident of Vienna, VA. "I have to pause, and I can't resume. I just can't move my legs."

Through trial and error, Grill and her care team figured out a solution. "I get myself in a runner's stance, like I'm standing at a starting line, with one foot in front of the other," she says. "Then I do a 'ready, set, go' in my head, and launch myself forward."

The experiences of Mason and Grill illustrate that different situations call for different corrective methods. For a paper published in the September 2021 issue of *Neurology*, Dr. Tosserams and her co-investigator Jorik Nonnekes, MD, PhD, surveyed 4,324 adults with Parkinson's disease who reported disabling gait impairments to find out how much they knew about and used various compensation strategies. The researchers grouped the strategies into seven categories: internal cues (such as walking to an imagined

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Parkinson's Disease Question Corner

Email: barbaramarquardt@outlook.com

Question: What are some ways I could reduce Parkinson's symptoms in 2023?

Answer: Great question to start the New Year off right! The following are some very useful considerations:

- Eat a nutrient dense, whole foods diet.
- Make sure you have enough Vitamin D, sun exposure, and Omega 3's.
- Look into going Gluten-Free.
- Look into a Keto/low carbohydrate diet.
- Attend to gut health.
- Reduce exposures to toxins. Make sure you set up a healthy living environment. Look into an air purifier such as Air Doctor; use a water filter such as the Berkey Filter; decrease BPA and plastics use; test your home for mold; decrease exposures to pesticides; and use clean home and personal care products, look for recommendations on the Environmental Working Group website www.ewg.org
- Improve your sleep by no blue light exposure before bed, and no cell phone by your bed at night.
- Look into botanicals and supplements to help improve brain health such as medicinal mushrooms like Lion's Mane. Always work with a knowledgeable health care professional such as a Functional Medicine Physician or Naturopath when adding new botanicals, supplements or medications.
- Exercise more, it increases neuroplasticity and BDNF.
- Decrease stress with a daily meditation practice.
- Look into infrared light therapy, and near infrared saunas.
- Look into LDN (Low Dose Naltrexone), and Medical Cannabis with the help of a Functional Medicine doctor.

May your New Year be happy and healthy!

How to Improve Gait in Parkinson's Disease *(cont'd from pg. 1)*

beat), external cues (walking to the beat of a metronome or using a laser pointer to create a target on the ground), making wider turns, incorporating relaxation techniques to reduce stress, watching other people walk and mimicking their movements, adopting new walking patterns (such as raising the knees high or walking backward), and using the legs in other ways (such as riding a bicycle). Mason's walking poles are an external cue, while Grill's reciting of "ready, set, go" would be an internal cue.

Dr. Tosserams and Dr. Nonnekes found that most strategies generally work well for most patients, but they need to experiment to find the best ones for their circumstances, says Dr. Tosserams, who believes that being aware of different strategies helps. "If you're having trouble with one, you can try one of the others," she says.

February Meeting—February 1, 2023

We are pleased to have back **Angela Ridgel, Ph.D, ACSM-EP. Dr. Ridgel is a Professor in Exercise Science/Physiology and the Associate Director of the Brain Health Research Institute at Kent State University.** She received her undergraduate degree in Biology from The College of William and Mary in Virginia, a Master's degree in Biology at Villanova University in Pennsylvania and her Doctoral degree in Biomedical Sciences from Marshall University in West Virginia. Dr. Ridgel completed her Post-Doctoral training at Case Western Reserve University and Cleveland Clinic. Her early work used animal models to examine the neurobiology of movement and the effects of aging on movement. Over the last 15 years, she has been interested in how aging and neurological disorders limits movement and cognition in humans. Dr. Ridgel's current research project examines how exercise and movement therapy can be used for neurorehabilitation in Parkinson's disease. She will be talking on her ongoing research collaborations with colleagues at University Hospital, Case Western Reserve University, and the Cleveland VA Medical Center.

We need your donations to continue bringing you the PEP News and for other expenses. A special thanks to those who contribute at the monthly meetings. To send a donation, please make your checks payable to Parkinson Education Program and mail to 2785 Edgehill Rd., Cleveland Heights, OH 44106

Freezing and PD

(Excerpt from Parkinson's Foundation)

Many people with mid-stage to advanced Parkinson's disease (PD) experience "freezing." Freezing is the temporary, involuntary inability to move. Not all people with PD experience freezing episodes, but those who do have a greater risk of falling. The problem can occur at any time. Some people are more prone to freezing episodes than others. Usually, freezing only lasts a few seconds, but it is one of the more frustrating and often dangerous symptoms of PD.

What is Freezing?

When a person experiences freezing, they may feel like their feet are stuck in place, or it may be difficult to get up from a chair. Freezing may also affect other parts of the body or your speech. While the cause of freezing is unknown, many people with Parkinson's freeze when they are due for the next dose of dopaminergic medications. This is called "off" freezing. Usually, freezing episodes lessen after taking the medicine.

What Can Trigger a Freezing Episode?

Freezing episodes can happen at any time but tend to happen more often when a person with Parkinson's is in transition. This can include starting to move – transitioning from standing to walking – or transitioning within a space, like walking through doorways, turning a corner, turning around or stepping from one type of surface to another. Freezing can increase in stressful situations or can be triggered by attempted multitasking.

Is Freezing Dangerous?

About 38 percent of people living with PD fall each year. PD-related falls occur mostly when turning or changing directions and are often related to a freezing episode. Not everyone living with PD will experience freezing episodes, but those who do are at a much higher risk of falling.

Freezing creates a danger of falling because the beginning and end of a freezing episode are unpredictable. The unpredictability of freezing, along with efforts by well-meaning companions to force the person with PD to move, may cause loss of balance and falls.

Managing Freezing Episodes

Talk to your doctor about freezing episodes. Adjusting your treatment may be helpful. You should also ask about seeing a physical and/or occupational therapist. Physical therapists trained in Parkinson's disease can teach you techniques that reduce your risk of falling. An occupational therapist can help you to minimize the risk of falls in your home.

How can a Friend or Family Member Help?

If your loved one is frozen, remain calm. Wait patiently for several seconds to see if the episode passes and be sure not to rush or push the individual during a freezing episode. If the person is unable to move without assistance, try placing your foot perpendicular to the person and ask them to step over it. You can encourage the individual to try marching or counting, or to try some of the other tips mentioned above. If your loved one stays frozen, you can try to help rock them gently from side to side.

Tips: How to Get Moving When You Freeze

- Be aware of freezing triggers and prepare strategies in advance.
- March or goose step (swing your leg high and parallel to the ground with knees locked).
- Shift the weight of your body from one leg to another.
- Turn on music and step in time with the rhythm. If you freeze frequently, wearing a radio or smartphone can be helpful. If you aren't able to turn on music while you are frozen, try humming, singing or counting.
- Imagine a line to step over or focus on a target on the floor to step on. Consider using a mobile laser device to create a line in front of you to step over.
- Turn by walking half a circle or square instead of by a pivot turn.

DISCLAIMER: The material contained in this newsletter is intended to inform. PEP makes no recommendations or endorsements in the care and treatment of Parkinson's disease. Always consult your own physician before making any changes. No one involved with the newsletter receives financial benefit from any programs/products listed.



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Study Highlights Potential Benefits of Krill Oil for PD

(Excerpt from parkinsonslife.eu)

Krill oil, a substance that comes from shrimp-like sea creatures, is rich in healthy properties, such as omega-3 and anti-inflammatory molecules. Researchers at the University of Oslo, Norway, have investigated whether this substance could help to slow cell degeneration in people with Parkinson's.

The scientists used worm models of the condition to conduct their research, which was published in the journal, 'Aging'. They found that those treated with krill oil were protected from the loss of dopamine-producing neurons. Additionally, krill oil was linked to increased movement, better performance on dopamine-based learning tests and reduced clumps of alpha-synuclein (a protein associated with the onset of Parkinson's).

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The researchers noted in their conclusions that if the findings were reflected in human trials, "krill oil supplementation might serve as a possible approach for healthy brain ageing interventions".

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TRIBUTES

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