

Michael J. Fox:

This is Michael J. Fox, thanks for listening to this podcast. Learn more about The Michael J. Fox Foundation's work and how you can help speed a cure at michaeljfox.org.

Speaker 2:

Welcome to a recap of our latest Ask the MD video, tune in as a movement disorder specialist at The Michael J. Fox Foundation answers your questions about Parkinson's research and care. Learn more about living well with Parkinson's disease. Free resources like this podcast are always available at michaeljfox.org.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun:

I'm Dr. Rachel Dolhun, a movement disorder specialist, and Vice President of Medical Communications at The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's research. I usually talk to you from our offices in New York City, but like many of you I'm working remotely because of the pandemic. And also like many of you, I've had to find new and creative ways to do many of my usual activities, like exercise.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun:

Exercise is so important for Parkinson's and also for general health, and especially during this time for things like mood and sleep. But we've had to be creative and find new ways to get and stay active with gyms closed and group exercise on hold. But there are many options. You can take a walk or go for a bike ride in the park, meet with a trainer online, join an exercise class for people with Parkinson's online, or even work out from home with little or no equipment.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun:

The best exercise is the one that you'll actually do, so find something that you enjoy and will do regularly. And if you need motivation, lean on your support system or people in the Parkinson's community who can help you find that motivation to get active or stay active. Try to think of exercise as part of your Parkinson's treatment program, it's just as important as the medication that you take, and it's one of the best things that you can do for your body and for your mind. For more on the benefits of exercise and Parkinson's watch this Ask the MD video, which was recorded in 2015, but which still holds true today.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun:

Today I'll be talking about exercise and Parkinson's disease. Regular exercise is good for everyone, whether or not you have Parkinson's disease. We know it's good for overall wellbeing, heart and bone health, and just general quality of life. But if you do have Parkinson's, we know that it's beneficial for motor and non-motor symptoms. For motor symptoms it can improve coordination, gait, and balance, and it can also decrease stiffness. For non-motor symptoms it can boost your mood and your memory, improve your sleep, and also less in constipation. We're often asked what the best exercise for people with Parkinson's disease is, and while there isn't one specific exercise that's recommended for everybody with Parkinson's, there are certain exercises that can help specific symptoms within Parkinson's.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun:

For example, yoga and Tai Chi are very good for balance problems and things like dancing can help with coordination issues. The best exercise is simply one that you'll stick to, so it's important to find something that you like and you feel safe doing so that you'll do it regularly. Some people prefer to work out alone, while other people are motivated by group exercise. A lot of people enjoy cycling, walking, running, or swimming, while other people prefer golfing or boxing. No matter what your level of fitness and your stage of disease, there's something you can do to stay active.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun:

Researchers are trying to see if exercise can change the course of Parkinson's disease, but it hasn't yet been proven to slow the progression. They're also trying to determine better ways to measure the actual benefits of exercise, and to see if one type of exercise truly is better for Parkinson's disease. Work with your doctor and a physical therapist to design an exercise regimen that meets your symptoms and individual needs.

Dr. Rachel Dolhun:

I hope this information motivates you to get or stay active. And if you need more incentive, you can sign up for the Michael J. Fox Foundation's Virtual Foxtrot on October 3rd. To learn more about the Foxtrot and for more on exercise, you can visit our website.

Speaker 2:

Thanks for listening. Looking for a specific topic not covered in today's episode? All Ask the MD blogs and videos are available for free at michaeljfox.org.

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