



Healthy Aging Information

From moving out of your home to money management, we have all your aging needs covered.



Powered by the Experts at The Peter B. Lewis Aquatic & Therapy Center **Aquatic Exercise Easing Symptoms of Parkinson's Disease**



Water is known to revive the spirit, but it can also help to ease the difficulties of the symptoms of Parkinson's disease (PD), which include rigidity, resting tremors, slowness in starting movement, and loss of postural reflexes. As symptoms progress, independence can decline by varying degrees.

Participating in aquatic exercise is a way to regain a sense of control and enjoy doing something good for the body, especially when experiencing loss of some abilities that may include reduction of flexibility, strength, endurance and balance. This interferes with activities such as walking, driving, household chores, dressing, grooming and many leisure activities.

According to The American Parkinson Disease Association, joining an aquatic group is beneficial, and can even become a mini support group that shares life experiences and disease coping strategies. Socialization and understanding, along with aquatic therapy, can boost morale. Research published by the Family Caregiver Alliance, National Center on Caregiving indicates that the number of people in the United States with Parkinson's ranges from 500,000 to 1,500,000. Approximately 50,000 new cases are reported annually. Parkinson's is more common in people 60 or older. The incidence of Parkinson's is expected to increase as baby boomers age.

According to the Hoehn and Yahr scale, Parkinson's disease has the following five stages:

- Stage I: Symptoms are only on one side of the body
- Stage II: Symptoms are on both sides of the body
- Stage III: Balance is impaired
- Stage IV: Assistance is required to walk and other symptoms are severe
- Stage V: Wheelchair bound



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A physical therapist can design an exercise program specifically for the needs of people with PD, which may include:

- Stretching
- Strengthening the legs
- Strategies for moving, improving balance, and strengthening the trunk



A full evaluation will help determine the appropriate exercise program.

While there is not yet a cure for Parkinson's disease, medical and physical treatment can prolong activities, and lessen the impact of advanced symptoms such as memory difficulties, high emotions and mood changes. Exercising with a friend or loved one is a great option for encouragement and a safe and fun way to spend time together.

Steve Seneda, Therapist at The Peter B. Lewis Aquatic Center located at Menorah Park suggests you find an aquatic therapy center that offers a large, heated therapy pool with a safe ramp for walkers, wheelchairs, water walking and therapy. "Zero entry" therapy pools used for water therapy are entered simply by standing while the whole floor is lowered into warm water.

Seneda said aquatic exercise:

- Is not as intense as land exercise
- Is less painful, as the buoyancy of water decreases your body weight by as much as 90%, and raises your center helping you to become steadier as you walk
- Not impossible, and many people who use a walker or cane are able to walk in the water with just a flotation device



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- Better support for the body, providing resistance to improve strength and cardiovascular endurance.

Ask your doctor if aquatic therapy will help you.

Meet our expert: Steve S. Saneda

Steve received his physical therapy training at Cleveland State University in 1997 and a bachelor's from the University of Toledo. He has attended extensive continuing education for aquatic, therapeutic exercises and manual interventions. Steve has had 14 years experience working with clients post surgically, with acute strains, chronic pain, as well as neurological problems. He has treated work injuries and performs Functional Capacity Evaluations for BWC clients. He utilizes various evaluative techniques including Selective Functional Movement Assessments. Steve along with our entire staff enjoys working with everyone. In Steve's free time he enjoys spending time with his family, reading and directing a youth basketball league. For more information, call the Peter B. Lewis Aquatic & Therapy Center at 216-595-7345.