HKC FOUNDATION for Parkinson's
Empowering people to move

June 21, 2026

"I was thinking about doing spring cleaning, but realized that my vacuum was just collecting dust. So I threw is away!

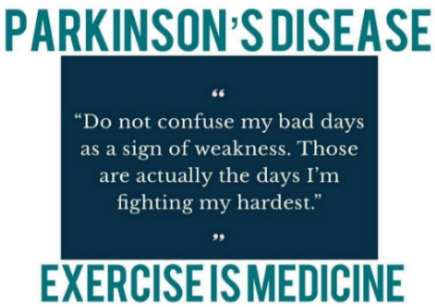
HKC FOUNDATION for Parkinson's

Events located at Jamestown Presbyterian Church
1804 Guilford College Rd, Jamestown, NC 27282

Learn more about our events
contact: Alesia at 336-365-2745
alesia@hamilkerrchallenge.com

SAVE THE DATES

01/24/2026	PD Gathering	10:00am-1:00pm
02/08/2026	Support Group	2:00pm-3:30pm
03/08/2026	Support Group	2:00pm-3:30pm
04/11/2026	HKC Bike.Run.Walk Event	
05/03/2026	Support Group	2:00pm-3:30pm
06/14/2026	Support Group	2:00pm-3:30pm
07/18/2026	PD Gathering	10:00am-1:00pm
08/09/2026	Support Group	2:00pm-3:30pm
09/13/2026	Support Group	2:00pm-3:30pm
10/17/2026	PD Gathering	10:00am-1:00pm
11/08/2026	Support Group	2:00pm-3:30pm
12/13/2026	Support Group	2:00pm-3:30pm



Click the icon for the past two weeks' class recordings:

HKC Strength Classes

HKC Parkinson's Fitness Classes

Parkinson's and Exercise – what does that mean?

When you first walked into a Rock Steady Boxing class, I bet you thought you were going to spend 1 hour and 15 minutes throwing punches—with only a few breaks for water.

But is that what Rock Steady Boxing is all about?

Let's take a closer look at what Rock Steady Boxing is and the type of exercise prescription we use to help slow the progression of Parkinson's symptoms.

First, it's important to understand that there is currently no cure for Parkinson's disease. However, a growing body of research and quantifiable data shows that exercise is one of the most powerful tools available to help slow the progression of symptoms, maintain function, and improve quality of life.

That's why our classes are designed to be much more than boxing. Every workout is intentionally structured to address the neurological challenges associated with Parkinson's, including balance, coordination, reaction time, posture, gait, strength, cognitive function, and movement amplitude.

The punches are just one piece of a much larger prescription designed to help you fight back against Parkinson's every day.

Let's take a closer look at the recommended Parkinson's Exercise Prescription, courtesy of Bridges for Parkinson's

Colleen Bridges M.Ed, NSCA-CPT, PDFS, Belmont University Occupational Therapy Advisory Board, 2020 MedFit Education Professional of the Year
& Renee Rouleau- M.S. Neuroscience and Bridges for Parkinson's Medical Science Advisor

One of the most common questions I am asked is:
"How many days a week should I exercise if I have Parkinson's?"

The answer may surprise you—but it's also empowering. **5 to 6 days per week.**

This isn't about overdoing it or pushing your body to exhaustion. It's about consistency. Research shows that regular, ongoing exercise can have what scientists call a **neuroprotective effect**—meaning it may help protect the brain and potentially slow the progression of Parkinson's disease.

The benefits of exercising frequently include:

- Enhance dopamine signaling
- Help preserve existing brain cells
- Improve mood and memory
- Support neuroplasticity (the brain's ability to adapt and rewire)
- Potentially promote the growth of new neurons

In other words, exercise doesn't just help your muscles—it helps your brain.

Sporadic workouts simply don't provide the same neurological benefit. Parkinson's responds best to **regular movement**, **repeated patterns**, and **intentional challenges** to both the body *and* the brain. That's why we emphasize frequency so strongly at Bridges for Parkinson's. Movement isn't just something you do when you "feel like it." For PD, movement is part of your daily medicine cabinet.

So, what does a weekly workout schedule look like for someone living with Parkinson's Disease?

- 2-3x a week a Comprehensive Exercise Plan/closes work on:
    - Cardio
    - Strength
    - Balance
    - Movement in multiple planes of motion
    - Coordination
    - Agility
    - Dual and Triple Tasking
    - Fine Motor
    - Voice and Facial Skills
    - Cognitive skills
    - Boxing

- 2x a week of moderate cardio - walk, bike, hike, swim, pickle ball, golf etc.
- 1x a week of Tai Chi, yoga or stretch class. ALL of which we offer at Bridges for Parkinson's!

We know that exercising consistently isn't something a lot of people want to do, especially during the chilly months of winter. However, having an exercise routine helps not only your body, but your brain! For instance, research has shown through several observational group studies that those who maintained exercise routines (like the ones listed above) showed slower disease progression long term, in both motor and non-motor symptoms (Tsukita et al., 2022)! And what's more is that routine exercise boosts mood entirely, meaning any baseline anxiety or depression improves based on how much movement you do regularly (Harro et al., 2022).

It can even change your brain chemistry, which has been demonstrated in early pilot studies looking at aerobic exercise (which can be done in Bridges for Parkinson's Classes) and neuroprotection. Researchers found that even in these small cohorts of people with PD, there was a significant increase in neuroprotective agents that help to keep remaining dopamine cells healthy, while decreasing inflammatory pathways that could hurt dopamine signaling (Ishaq et al., 2025). These and many more studies help solidify that movement is medicine for both the body and the brain.

And when that "medicine" is taken consistently, something powerful happens. Movement becomes more than medicine—it becomes a miracle.

Bridges for Parkinson's Weekly Exercise Program

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Rest	*Comprehensive Exercise Routine	Cardio	*Comprehensive Exercise Routine	Cardio	*Comprehensive Exercise Routine	Yoga/Tai Chi

***Comprehensive Exercise combines:**

- Cardio
- Strength (includes fall prevention)
- Balance, agility, coordination
- Dual-tasking (triple-tasking for some classes)
  - Cognitive/Mental Drills
- Stretching/Flexibility
- Fine motor, vocal/facial drills

Contact Bridges for Parkinson's:
Colleen Bridges: 615-944-3284
info@bridgesforparkinsons.com
Facebook/Instagram: Bridges for Parkinsons
www.BridgesforParkinsons.com

BRIDGES FOR PARKINSON'S

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References:

Harro, C. C., Shoemaker, M. J., Coatney, C. M., Lentine, V. E., Lieffers, L. R., Quigley, J. J., … & Khoo, S. K. (2022). Effects of nordic walking exercise on gait, motor/non-motor symptoms, and serum brain-derived neurotrophic factor in individuals with Parkinson's disease. Frontiers in Rehabilitation Sciences, 3. https://doi.org/10.3389/fresc.2022.1010097

Ishaq et al., "Effects of exercise training on nigrostriatal neuroprotection in Parkinson's disease: a systematic review," Frontiers in Neuroscience, vol. 17, no. 1464168, 2025. Online. Available: https://doi.org/10.3389/fnins.2024.1464168.

Tsukita, K., Sakamaki-Tsukita, H., & Takahashi, R. (2022). Long-term Effect of Regular Physical Activity and Exercise Habits in Patients With Early Parkinson Disease. Neurology, 98(8). https://doi.org/10.1212/wnl.0000000000013218

Anxiety and Parkinson's

When people think about Parkinson's disease, they usually think about tremors, stiffness, balance problems, or slow movement. What many people don't realize is that anxiety is also extremely common in Parkinson's.

In fact, anxiety can sometimes appear before a person is even diagnosed.

There are several reasons why anxiety may develop. Parkinson's affects brain circuits and neurotransmitters involved in mood and emotions, not just movement. Living with an unpredictable

condition can also create understandable worries about health, independence, finances, relationships, and the future.

Anxiety can show up in many different ways. Some people experience constant worry. Others feel restless, on edge, or overwhelmed. Panic attacks, racing thoughts, irritability, difficulty concentrating, and sleep problems are also common. Physical symptoms such as a pounding heart, sweating, nausea, or shortness of breath may occur as well.

Many people blame themselves for feeling anxious, but anxiety is not a sign of weakness. It is a recognized and legitimate part of Parkinson's disease for many patients.

The good news is that anxiety can often be managed successfully. Regular exercise, adequate sleep, relaxation techniques, counseling, support groups, mindfulness practices, and medications can all help. **For some people, improving Parkinson's symptom control may also reduce anxiety levels.**

Perhaps most importantly, talk about it. Anxiety tends to grow in silence. Sharing your concerns with your doctor, caregiver, family members, or fellow Parkinson's patients can make a tremendous difference.

If anxiety has become part of your Parkinson's journey, you are far from alone. Many people in this community face the same challenge every day. With the right support and treatment, anxiety can become more manageable and less controlling.

Sleep and Parkinson's

Parkinson's can make it hard to get a good night's sleep. Symptoms, side effects from medications and insomnia can keep you up, while REM sleep behavior disorder (RBD) can lead to acting out dreams and more. sleep-problems-2026.pdf

Sleep plays an important role in overall health, including how we feel and function during the day. Many people with Parkinson's disease (PD) have difficulty getting restful sleep. These challenges often have more than one cause. Understanding what is affecting sleep can help address the causes.

If any of these problems happen regularly:
Waking up often during the night
Trouble falling back asleep
Still feeling tired after a full night in bed
Sleeping more during the day or napping often
Acting out dreams or moving a lot during sleep / Strong urges to move your legs at night

Quick Facts
Sleep challenges affect more than 75% of people with PD.
Sleep is often lighter and more easily disrupted.
Many sleep problems improve with a combination of approaches.

Common Causes for Sleep Issues in Parkinson's

Parkinson's affects the brain systems that help control sleep and wakefulness, which can lead to lighter, less restful sleep. Medications, mood, movement symptoms and certain sleep conditions may also play a role. Often, more than one of these factors is involved:

- Movement symptoms at night, such as tremor, stiffness or cramping (dystonia)
- Difficulty getting comfortable in bed because of pain or limited mobility
- Vivid dreams or acting out dreams during sleep (REM sleep behavior disorder), which can include talking, shouting or sudden movements that may cause injury
- Strong urges to move the legs at night (restless legs syndrome), which can make it difficult to get comfortable or fall back asleep
- Bladder urges at night, which may be related to overactive bladder, lighter sleep, daytime low blood pressure — or a mix
- Medications or medication timing can affect alertness or may lead to symptoms returning overnight
- Sleep apnea, a breathing problem during sleep that becomes more common with age and can disturb restful sleep
- Racing or repetitive thoughts when trying to fall back asleep

Ongoing trouble falling or staying asleep or not feeling rested aftersleep, is called insomnia — no matter what the cause.

Key Areas to Support Sleep
Sleep problems in Parkinson's are often complex. Start with a conversation with your doctor, who may adjust treatment, refer you to a specialist or recommend further evaluation, such as a sleep study. Improving sleep often includes changes to routines, medication, mental health support and other treatments.

Daytime Habits
Regular wake times, natural light exposure and physical activity help support sleep at night. Sleeping too much during the day or taking long or late naps can make it harder to sleep at night.

Evening Routines
Going to bed at the same time each night helps your body know when it's time to sleep. Dim light and calming activities in the evening signal your brain it's time to sleep. Keep your sleep space dark, cool and quiet so you're less likely to wake during the night

Medications
Medication timing can affect sleep. If medications wear off overnight, symptoms such as stiffness or tremor may return. Some medications may also increase alertness or cause vivid dreams. Let your doctor know if sleep problems seem related to medication timing or effects.

Emotional Health
Addressing stress, anxiety or low mood is an important part of sleep care. Options may include cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-I), which helps change sleep habits and thoughts about sleep.

Mindfulness practices, such as slow breathing, body scan exercises or guided relaxation, can help the body wind down.

Additional Sleep Treatments
Depending on the issue, treatment options may include melatonin, CPAP therapy for sleep apnea or carefully selected sleep medications. Talk with your doctor before starting any sleep medication.

Tips for Understanding Sleep Problems
Consider a sleep diary. Track sleep, medications and symptoms to spot patterns and share useful details with your care team.

Look at sleep over time. One difficult night can affect the next day, but it may not reflect how sleep is going overall.

Ask a bed partner what they've noticed at night. Talk about what you are each experiencing and share it with your care team to help address sleep concerns.

Check out **Episode 121: Parkinson's Disease and Sleep** **and** **Episode 46: Addressing Sleep Discomfort with Parkinson's | Parkinson's Foundation** – these podcasts are a bit dated but still contain helpful information.

Are You Ready to End Your Nerve Pain Journey

To quote Michele Walker: Many of the people I work with tell me the same thing: "I thought the numbness, tingling, burning, or shooting pain was just something I had to live with."

Over time, these symptoms can begin affecting much more than comfort.
They can make walking less confident, interfere with favorite activities, and increase concerns about balance and falling.

That's one of the reasons I've decided to host another educational workshop focused specifically on neuropathy and sciatica.

Don't Let Nerve Pain Keep You From Doing the Things You Love: Learn How Neuropathy and Sciatica Can Affect Balance, Mobility, and Independence—and What You Can Do About It

- Saturday, July 11
- 10:00 AM or 2:00 PM
- ProActive Therapy & Wellness Studio Lake Brandt Road, Summerfield

During this free workshop, we'll discuss:

- Why symptoms such as numbness, tingling, burning, and nerve pain occur
- How neuropathy and sciatica can affect balance, walking, and daily activities
- Common approaches people try—and why they don't always provide lasting results
- Practical strategies that may help support nerve health, improve movement, and increase confidence
- Non-invasive options that may help reduce symptoms and improve function

As always, my goal is to provide clear information and practical solutions you can use right away.

Whether you're personally dealing with these symptoms or know a friend or family member who is, I think you'll find the workshop valuable.

Because we keep these events small and interactive, registration is required.

To register for this free event, please reach out to Michele Walker PT, Owner and Therapist

ProActive Therapy & Wellness
336-403-9582
info@ptaw.net

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

~Monday, 11am Hamil-Kerr Strength class (zoom) Coach Betsy

~Saturday 11am Hamil-Kerr Parkinson's Fitness (zoom) Coach Betsy

~Thursday, 3pm Zoom PD Spin, Ragsdale YMCA

~Thursday, 12pm In Person PD Spin, Spears YMCA

~ In-person Parkinson's Spin Class at YWCA of Highpoint, Tuesday and Thursday- 12:00

~In-person Parkinson's Spin Class at Ragsdale YMCA. Tuesday and Thursday- 10:15

~ In-person Parkinson's Dance with Hilary Savage – 1pm second and fourth Wednesday of every month, PurEnergy, 1905 Ashwood Ct

~Parkinson's Stretch Class at Rock Steady Boxing, Greensboro (spouses welcome)- Friday at 11:30am

~Rock Steady Boxing - Greensboro (in person)

~Rock Steady Boxing of Archdale (in person)

~Rock Steady Boxing of Asheboro (in person)

~Rock Steady Boxing of Lexington (in person)

~A.C.T. By Prince Deese

~Will Powell-Training - 336-706-0271

~For information on in-person 1:1 training, contact Alesia Pendleton

ONLINE RESOURCES

~Michael J Fox Foundation: www.michaeljfox.org

~Davis Phinney Foundation: Live Well with Parkinson's TODAY - Davis Phinney Foundation

~ Carolinas Chapter | Parkinson's Foundation

~Parkinson's & Movement Disorders Alliance: www.pmdalliance.org

~Parkinson's Association of the Carolinas: www.parkinsonassociation.org

~Parkinson's Foundation: Homepage | Parkinson's Foundation

And of course, reach out to me anytime.
Yours, Coach B

Rock Steady Boxing Certified Coach
Certified Parkinson's Disease Fitness Specialist
Certified PWR Moves Instructor
ISSA Certified Personal Trainer