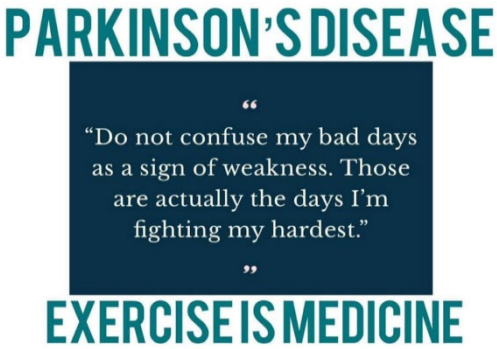
FOUNDATION for Parkinson's
Empowering people to move

July 28, 2025

What's faster, hot or cold?

Hot, because you can "catch" a cold



BRIDGES FOR PARKINSON'S

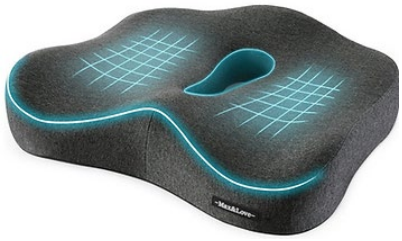
How Vacations Can Affect Parkinson's Disease - Written by Kristi Riker OTD, OTR/L

Did you know researchers have found almost half of people with PD experience a **decrease** in symptoms when on vacation? Study participants reported improvements in both **motor symptoms** (tremor, stiffness, pain) and **nonmotor symptoms** (decreased stress, improved sleep, decreased fatigue) on vacation. Maybe it's time to plan a trip! But make sure to plan ahead for potential barriers.

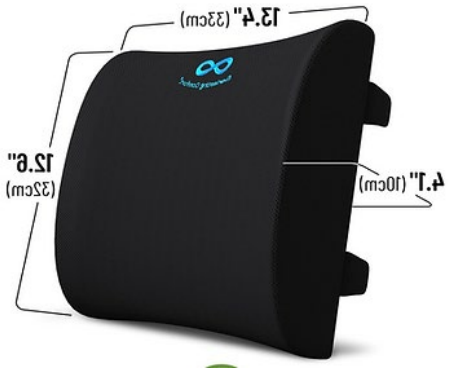
Traveling Barriers and Tips
What is the hardest part of traveling? Sitting for extended periods? Taking meds on time? Sticking to sleep routines? There are too many reasons to count! SO much goes into planning for travel. Here are some fun tips to help alleviate the stress.

Immobility and Stiffness/Pain:

- On road trips, **plan to stop** every 1-2 hours for walking/stretching breaks
- Complete **small exercises** in your seat: 20 shoulder rolls, 20 ankle pumps, 15 ankle circles, 15 knee lifts (complete each of these on each side of body, once per hour)
- Wear **compression socks** to reduce swelling
- **Lumbar support** for back or **orthopedic seat pad** for pressure relief



Orthopedic seat pad: https://www.amazon.com/Relieves-Sciatica-Degenerating-



Orthopedic

Lumbar support: https://www.amazon.com/Back-Cushion-Lumbar-Support

Limited Bathroom access: Lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) are common non-motor symptoms but are often overlooked in Parkinson's disease (PD). Urinary incontinence may make the idea of long car rides, plane flights, or bus trips pretty daunting.

- Avoid **bladder irritants** such as caffeine or spicy foods
- Map out **bathroom stops** ahead of time for road trips

- Bring **incontinence supplies** just in case
- Practice **pelvic floor exercises** to improve bladder control (come to Kristi in the gym if you would like some guidance on these exercises)

Difficulty getting in/out of car:

- To get out of the car, move the seat all the way back to create space
- Reclining the seat slightly may help with pivoting
- A firmer seat cushion will make it easier to transfer
- Scoot forward to edge of seat, swing both legs out together, use a rocking motion to stand
- Use adaptive equipment:
    - A **seat swivel** helps if pivoting is too difficult

Seat swivel: https://www.amazon.com/Sojoy-iGelComfort-Cushion

A **car cane** is a portable handle that inserts into the door latch

Car cane: https://www.amazon.com/Vive-Car-Assist-Standing

Medication timing: Meds are tricky enough to keep up with on the daily, let alone when your routine is thrown out the window during travel.

- Use a **medication alarm/watch** to maintain the schedule
- Pre-sort meds in a **travel pill organizer** labeled by time of day
- Keep meds in a **cool, accessible place** (not packed away)
- Bring **extra doses** in case of delays
- If you travel often and this is something you really struggle with, consider talking to your doctor about the possibility of a **med pump** to lessen the mental load

Disrupted rest routines: Travel can completely throw off sleep routines and be even more troubling when paired with sleep disorders

- Do your best to stick to your **regular wake/rest times** even when travelling
- Avoid overbooking daytime adventures and build **downtime** into the itinerary
- Plan ahead to accommodate sleep disorders
    - **Sleep breathing disorder**? Think about oxygen levels if you are traveling to altitude. If you use a CPAP, consider getting a smaller, portable machine
    - **REM sleep behavior disorder**? Take measures to ensure safety of new sleeping environments (move objects or furniture that may cause injuries during dream enactment)
    - **Daytime sleepiness**? Light therapy in the mornings may help!

Stress & Anxiety During Travel: Studies have found that 25% percent of people with PD have anxiety, which may include panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder and social phobia. If you deal with one or multiple types of anxiety, traveling can be MUCH more intimidating.

- Plan the route and **lodging in advance** to reduce uncertainty
- Use **GPS apps with real-time traffic updates** to avoid surprises
- Bring **familiar comfort items** (music, snacks, pillow)
- Practice **deep breathing** or mindfulness exercises while riding
- To avoid becoming over-stimulated by the environment, bring **noise cancelling headphones** and an **eye mask** to use when possible

Lastly, do you best while traveling to join Bridges for Parkinson's *VIRTUAL CLASSES* and keep up with your exercise. **"Motivation gets you started. Habit keeps you going."** – Jim Ryun

Happy Travels!

Resources:

Janssen Daalen JM, Hubbers J, Sharifi Bonab M, Mathur S, Thijssen DHJ, Bloem BR, Meinders MJ. How Vacations Affect Parkinson's Disease. Mov Disord Clin Pract. 2022 Nov 2;10(1):151-153. doi: 10.1002/mdc3.13597. PMID: 36698995; PMCID: PMC9847288.

Stefani, A., Högl, B. Sleep in Parkinson's disease. *Neuropsychopharmacol.* 45, 121–128 (2020). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41386-019-0448-y

Nadeeka N.N.W. Dissanayaka, Elizabeth White, John D. O'Sullivan, Rodney Marsh, Nancy A. Pachana, Gerard J. Byrne

Front. Aging Neurosci., 11 September 2022, Sec. Parkinson's Disease and Aging-related Movement Disorders Volume 14 - 2022 | https://doi.org/10.3389/fnagi.2022.977572

Links:

Lumbar support: https://www.amazon.com/Back-Cushion-Lumbar-Support
Orthopedic seat pad: https://www.amazon.com/Relieves-Sciatica-Degenerating-Orthopedic
Seat swivel: https://www.amazon.com/Sojoy-iGelComfort-Cushion
Car cane: https://www.amazon.com/Vive-Car-Assist-Standing

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

~Monday, 11am Hamil-Kerr Strength class (zoom)
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81028088770

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

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81028088770

~Thursday, 3pm Zoom PD Spin, Ragsdale YMCA

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81028088770

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

~ **In-person Parkinson's Spin Class at YWCA of Highpoint**
Tuesday and Thursday- 12:00-1:00

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

In-person / zoom Parkinson's Dance with Hilary Savage – 1pm second and fourth Wednesday of every month. If you plan on attending in person, please join Hilary at PurEnergy, 1905 Ashwood Ct and for those of you joining via zoom, here is the zoom link https://zoom.us/s/81028088770

In-Person Tai Chi with Michele
Michele's 1pm Tai Chi class takes place on the first and third Wednesday of every month at Michele's beautiful new studio - ProActive Therapy and Wellness, - 6579 Lake Brandt Rd, Summerfield **~**Rock Steady Boxing - Greensboro (in person)

~Rock Steady Boxing of Archdale (in person)

~A.C.T. By Prince Deese

~For information on in-person 1:1 training in your home, contact Alesia Pendleton pendleton.alesia@gmail.com

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

~Will Powell- 336-706-0271

ONLINE RESOURCES

~Michael J Fox Foundation: www.michaeljfox.org

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

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

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

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

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

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