

SEPT. 2026



AMERICAN
PARKINSON DISEASE
ASSOCIATION

ILLINOIS CHAPTER

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The Power of Connection

A Parkinson's diagnosis often brings questions, uncertainty, and life changes that can feel overwhelming. One of the most meaningful discoveries many people make is that support, understanding, and connection are available through the Parkinson's community.

"After being diagnosed with PD in October 2024, I immediately sought community and support...and found both in the APDA. I attended the Conference that November and was impressed by all the medical professionals and vendors present. I was able to ask many questions

and was able to speak directly with many of the doctors afterwards. The 2025 conference was just as impactful, and I highly recommend attending the 2026 conference. I'll be there!" – Mike, Downers Grove, IL

Stories like this remind us that information is important, but connection is just as valuable. Having opportunities to ask questions, learn from experts, and share experiences with others facing similar challenges can help people feel more informed, empowered, and supported.

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NOTE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A Season of Gathering

Here in Illinois, fall never seems to last long enough. Perhaps that is part of what makes it my favorite time of year. While it can be hard to say goodbye to warm summer days, there is something inviting about the cooler months ahead. Baseball and soccer give way to football, yard games move indoors to the family table, walks become a little more comfortable, and comfort food in the oven makes the whole house feel warm and welcoming.

What does fall bring back for you? A favorite routine, a family tradition, or simply more time to reconnect with the people you care about?

Fall seems to naturally bring us back together. We return to familiar routines, reconnect with people we may not have seen over the summer, and begin looking ahead to the months to come. The same is true here at APDA Illinois.

Connecting with others through a support group, educational program, social gathering, or our annual conference can provide valuable information, encouragement, and support. Some people contact APDA on the first day of diagnosis, while others wait months or even years. Whenever you are ready, our pro-

grams and services are thoughtfully designed to welcome people at every stage of the Parkinson's journey, and with a variety of needs and interests. You can learn more about upcoming opportunities on page 8.

As you and your family welcome fall, I hope you make time for the people and activities you enjoy, continue or begin healthy exercise habits, and find meaningful ways to stay connected. You might even pick up a good book, and we have copies of The Parkinson's Plan by Dorsey and Okun we are happy to lend you. You might also consider turning something you love to do into a fundraiser to help APDA Illinois reach and support more people living with Parkinson's disease. You can find ideas on page 5.

Whatever this new season brings, we are here for you and your family. Please reach out whenever you need information, support, or simply someone to listen and help you find the next step.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

With warmth,

Melanie Adams

Executive Director
APDA Illinois Chapter

Giving Highlight

Boost your giving power by donating appreciated stock to APDA. This allows you to receive a charitable tax deduction for the full market value and may avoid capital gains taxes, maximizing your gift.

For more information or questions, please reach out to Melanie Adams at: 708-522-4772 or madams@apdaparkinson.org



STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH YOUR DOCTOR

By: Sydney Settle OTD, OTR/L

Parkinson's disease is complex and is best managed with an interdisciplinary team of providers. A neurologist is a key player on your Parkinson's healthcare team. Their role is to provide treatment and coordinate care with other providers.

Appointments with your neurologist are incredibly valuable, therefore it is critical you make the most of this time. The more prepared and equipped you are for these appointments, the better personalized treatment they can provide.

Follow these strategies before, during, after, and between appointments to effectively communicate about your Parkinson's experience with your neurologist.

Starting 1 Month – 2 Weeks Prior:

Track and monitor motor and non-motor symptoms

Consider how long and often symptoms occur. Record how disruptive symptoms are, and the impact on your daily life. Use a journal, your cell phone, or worksheets to track and record symptoms.

Update medication list

Update your medication list to include all the prescription medications, over the counter medications, and supplements you are currently taking. Be sure to include dosage, time taken, and any side effects noted. Also beneficial to include any previously tried medications and reason for discontinuing.

Determine top 3 priorities

Frame your priorities around the expertise of the neurologist. Remember that the neurologist's role is treatment. Choose your top 3 priorities you'd like to discuss at the visit.

Ask a trusted person to join you

A trusted person can assist with logistics, such as parking and finding the office. They can be helpful in answering questions and providing an additional perspective to the neurologist. Additionally, they can take notes during the appointment, so you are able to fully engage with the neurologist but have the option to review information later.

1 Week – 1 Day Before:

Plan for logistics

Make sure you have the neurologist's office address and directions. Consider time of appointment and expected traffic when planning for travel time.

Gather items to bring

Compile the items to bring to the appointment including symptom list, medication list, extra dose of medication, water/snack, and a journal or phone for taking notes.



Day of Appointment:

Arrive early

Parkinson's symptoms can make it difficult to get out of door for an appointment. Allow plenty of time to get ready and arrive at the appointment early.

Stay focused on priorities

During the appointment, stay focused and discuss your priorities. Make sure the conversation stays focused on updates since your last appointment, along with your future treatment plan.

Ask:

Best way to follow-up between appointments

Make sure you have the correct information and way to get in touch if something comes up before your next appointment.

Referral to other providers

If needed, ask for a referral to other providers such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, or counseling.

Clarification, if needed

Do not hesitate to ask clarifying questions if something is unclear.

After Appointment:

Review notes

After the appointment, review the notes taken during the appointment, noting any significant changes in the treatment plan.

Implement changes

Incorporate these changes into your daily routine.

Set-up online healthcare portal, if applicable

If your doctor uses an online healthcare portal, make sure you have username and password. Set up your account and make sure you can message them if needed.

Schedule healthcare appointments

If you receive a referral to another healthcare provider, call and schedule your appointment.

Between Appointments:

Don't adjust treatment

Resist the temptation to adjust your treatment without notifying or discussing with your neurologist or nurse practitioner. This can limit their ability to make decisions regarding your treatment plan moving forward.

Continue to track and monitor symptoms

Track any significant changes and disruptive symptoms. Do not hesitate to call the nurse practitioner or use the online healthcare portal to share these symptoms with your neurologist.

CONNECT WITH APDA ILLINOIS CHAPTER

Engage with the many free in-person and virtual programs offered by the APDA Illinois Chapter. Join us for an exercise class, support group, and educational program near you!

Implement these practical strategies so you can become a more confident, active participant in your Parkinson's care.

Looking for Support?

Contact APDA to learn about local exercise classes, support groups and other resources near you.

708.329.9527

apdail@apdaparkinson.org

TURN YOUR PASSION INTO PURPOSE

HELP THOSE LIVING WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE & THEIR FAMILIES HERE IN ILLINOIS

Have an idea for a fun event, challenge, or activity? Make it a DIY fundraiser and make a meaningful difference for people living with Parkinson's disease and their families across Illinois.

Your unique fundraising event helps support people living with Parkinson's disease and their families. Your event will help provide local education programs, social and support groups, virtual wellness opportunities, and trusted resources for people living with Parkinson's and their families. Your impact is powerful — and together, we can help people live better today while moving closer to a cure.

Endless possibilities of FUNdraising (see more ideas on our website) like happy hours, game nights, bake sales, birthday fundraisers, dance parties, car washes, cornhole/tail gate toss or ping-pong competitions, concerts, comedy or trivia nights, and more!

Meaningful FUN & IMPACT is easy, get started developing your own DIY fundraiser!

Please contact Melanie Adams, Executive Director at madams@apdaparkinson.org



Comedy Night with Paul Farahvar

Paul knew little about PD until his father, a well respected orthopedic surgeon, was diagnosed in 2019. Paul is doing this DIY to support APDA in honor of his fathers memory.

This fall at Zanies in Rosemont



“Hosting the APDA concert was my privilege to give back and show that PD doesn't have to be the end of the line.”

Dave Mikulskis, lead vocalist of Hi Infidelity, who is living with Parkinson's disease.

EXERCISE CLASS SCHEDULE

Register online at www.apdaparkinson.org/il

ILLINOIS

BREESE

Clinton Co. YMCA

Tues/Thurs 12:30 pm – Exercise for Parkinson's

CARLINVILLE

Carlinville Area Hospital

Tuesday 10:00 am – Exercise for Parkinson's

CHAMPAIGN

YMCA

Mon 1:00 pm- Strength and Balance

Tues 1:00 pm- Functional Chair Fitness

Wed 1:00 pm- Seated Yoga

Thurs 1:00 pm- Parkinsons Fitness

Fri 1:00 pm- Functional Chair Fitness

COLUMBIA

Monroe County YMCA

Mon/Wed 12:05 pm- Exercise for Parkinson

DECATUR

YMCA

Mon/Wed/Fri 11:00 am – Pedaling for Parkinson's

Tues/Thurs 9:00 am – Parkinson's on the Move

DOWNTOWN BELLEVILLE

YMCA

Mon/Wed 11:00 am – Exercise for Parkinson's

EAST BELLEVILLE

YMCA

Tues/Thurs 11:00 am – Exercise for Parkinson's

EDWARDSVILLE

YMCA

Tues/Thurs 11:00 am – Exercise for Parkinson

HIGHLAND

Korte Rec Center

Mon/Wed/Thurs 11:00 am – Cycle and Strength

O'FALLON

YMCA

Tues/Thurs 12:00 pm – Exercise for Parkinson's

QUINCY

YMCA

Tues/Fri 10:30 am – Fit to Fight PD Boxing

SPRINGFIELD

First Presbyterian Church

Tues/Thurs 1:30 pm – The Joy of Movement

VIRTUAL VIA ZOOM

Wed 10:30 am – The Joy of Movement

APDA STRICTLY SOCIAL

Not interested in formal support groups yet? Join our monthly social events for the Parkinson's community. These gatherings provide a relaxed environment to connect, share stories, and simply enjoy one another's company at three locations:

NAPERVILLE

1st Tuesday - PD & Pizza

NORTHBROOK

3rd Thursday - PD & Pizza

VIRTUAL

2nd Wednesday- APDA Strictly Social



READY TO GET MOVING?

Virtual exercise options make it easy to stay active, build strength, and keep your energy up, all from home. Whether you're looking for gentle movement or a more energizing workout, there's something for everyone.

Visit our virtual events calendar to find a class that fits you!

<https://www.apdaparkinson.org/upcoming-events/>



SUPPORT GROUP SCHEDULE

Register online at www.apdaparkinson.org/il

ILLINOIS

ALTON

SSP Main Building, The Meeting Room
2nd Wednesday 1:00 pm

ALTON

SSP Wellness Center
2nd Tuesday 2:00 pm – Care Partners ONLY

AURORA

Waterford Place
1st Tuesday 10:30 am

AURORA

Waterford Place
3rd Tuesday 10:30 am – Care Partners Only

BELLEVILLE

**Southwestern Illinois College's
Programs and Services for Older Persons**
3rd Monday 1:30 pm

CARBONDALE

Prairie Living at Chautauqua
1st Wednesday 1:00 pm (check with APDA first)

CARLINVILLE

Carlinville Area Hospital, MOB Comm Rm
4th Tuesday 11:00 am

CENTRALIA

Heritage Woods Independent Living
2nd Wednesday 2:00pm

CHAMPAIGN

Savoy United Methodist Church
Every Monday 10:00am

CHICAGO

**Virtual PD Support Group, APDA Information and
Referral Center at University of Chicago**
4th Tuesday 11:00 am (group takes summers off)

CHICAGO

**Virtual Support Group MEN ONLY, APDA Information
and Referral Center at University of Chicago**
1st Tuesday 11:00 am

DECATUR

Westminster Presbyterian Church
3rd Thursday 1:30 pm

EDWARDSVILLE

YMCA Niebur Center
1st Tuesday 2:00 pm

GLEN ELLYN

Movement Revolution
3rd Monday 7:00 pm

GLENVIEW

Endeavor Health Ambulatory Care Center
2nd Tuesday 11:00 am

GREENVILLE

Bond County Senior Center
2nd Tuesday 1:00 pm

HIGHLAND

St. Joseph's Hospital, Sullivan Conf. Rm
4th Wednesday 2:00 pm

JACKSONVILLE

Virtual Group
1st Wednesday 1:00 pm

MAYWOOD

Loyola Outpatient Center
1st Monday 2:00 pm

NORMAL

The Activity Rec. Center (The ARC)
3rd Tuesday 1:00 pm

NORTH UTICA

Utica Fire Station
1st Monday 1:30 pm

NORTHBROOK

Covenant Living of Northbrook
4th Monday 10:00 am

NORTHFIELD

North Shore Senior Center
2nd and 4th Wednesday 2:00 pm

OKAWVILLE

St. Peters UCC Church Hall
1st Tuesday 6:30pm

QUINCY

Quincy Library
2nd Saturday 10:00 am

SPRINGFIELD

Chatham United Methodist Church
4th Friday 1:30 pm

2026 OPTIMISM WALK

THANK YOU to everyone who made our 2026 Optimism Walk such an unforgettable celebration of living better today with Parkinson's disease!

On June 20, our community came together in beautiful weather for a day filled with hope, connection, learning, and plenty of fun. We are deeply grateful to every walker, donor, sponsor, volunteer, community partner, and family member who helped make the day so meaningful.

Your support reminds people and families affected by Parkinson's that they are not alone—and it helps fuel APDA to continue providing critical education, resources, and connection throughout Illinois.

Although Optimism Walk Day has passed, our fundraising continues! There is still time to make a gift, share your fundraising page, or invite someone to support this important work. Every contribution, in every amount, helps us move closer to a future without Parkinson's disease.

Donate at: <http://apda.link/ILOptimismWalk>

**From the bottom of our hearts
thank you for walking beside us!**



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» Upcoming Events and Programs

APDA Illinois Parkinson's Conference

Thriving with Parkinson's: Strengthening Memory & Wellness

Monday, November 2nd, 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Expert speakers, local resources, and practical strategies to live better

Location: Northern Illinois University, Naperville

Volunteers Needed!

- **Support Group Facilitators** – Help create welcoming, supportive environments for people living with PD & caregivers
- **Mission Committee Members** – Assist with community outreach, awareness initiatives, educational events, and fundraising efforts
- **Education Program Volunteers** – Support workshops, conferences, and community education events

Parkinson's Education Programs

- Movement as Medicine
 - **Tuesday, September 22**
 - 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
 - **Location:** YMCA Bloomington Normal - Bloomington, IL
- "A-Round" Parkinson's Disease
 - **Thursday, October 29**
 - 2:00 PM - 4:30 PM
 - **Location:** The Presbyterian Church - Orland Park, IL
- Speech & Using Our Voice
 - **November 2026**
 - 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
 - **Location:** Hero's West, Joliet

Check out our Upcoming Events & Programs page for APDA Illinois updates: apda.link/ilupcoming.

PARKINSON'S DISEASE AND THE POWER OF PHYSICAL THERAPY: STAYING ACTIVE, MOBILE, AND CONFIDENT

By: Angie Saskowski

Exercise is especially important for individuals with Parkinson's. Research shows that regular, targeted exercise can improve movement quality, reduce stiffness, and support overall function. Physical therapists teach safe exercises that address common challenges such as shuffling steps, difficulty turning, freezing of gait, and reduced arm swing. Therapy sessions often include walking programs, balance training, stretching, and strengthening activities to support daily movement, focusing on moving with bigger motion in the upper and lower extremities through repetitive, high-effort movement. Physical therapy helps patients to learn to walk with larger steps, improve posture, and move more efficiently during daily activities.

Improving Balance and Reducing Falls

Balance issues and falls are common concerns for people with Parkinson's. Physical therapists assess balance, walking patterns, and fall risk, then provide targeted training to improve stability and safety. Therapy may include balance exercises, leg and core strengthening, and practice navigating stairs, curbs, and uneven surfaces.

As balance improves, many patients feel more confident

moving around their homes and communities. This increased confidence often leads to greater independence and reduced fear of falling.

Home Modification Recommendations

Physical therapists also help make the home environment safer. They may recommend removing loose rugs or clutter, improving lighting, installing grab bars in bathrooms, adding railings on stairs, or rearranging furniture to create clear walking paths. Therapists can also recommend assistive devices, such as canes or walkers, and provide training on how to use them safely. These simple changes can greatly reduce fall risk and support independence at home.

Confidence and Safety in the Community

Staying active outside the home is important for physical, emotional, and social well-being. Physical therapists help patients practice skills needed for safe community mobility, such as crossing streets, walking longer distances, getting in and out of cars, and managing symptoms in busy or distracting environments.

Through education, practice, and encouragement, physical therapy empowers people with Parkinson's to stay active, mobile, and confident helping them continue doing the things that matter most.



3 KEY TAKEAWAYS

Physical therapy helps people with Parkinson's stay active and independent.

A personalized physical therapy program improves strength, flexibility, posture, balance, and walking ability, helping individuals maintain mobility and continue participating in daily activities.

Targeted exercise can improve movement and reduce fall risk.

Regular, high-effort exercise and balance training can reduce stiffness, improve walking patterns, and build the confidence needed to move safely at home and in the community.

Small changes can make a big difference in safety and confidence.

Physical therapists provide home safety recommendations and community mobility training, helping people navigate everyday environments more safely while maintaining their independence.



Practical Tip: Take Bigger Steps

When walking, focus on taking slow, deliberate, bigger steps while swinging your arms naturally. This simple practice can help reduce shuffling, improve posture, and make walking feel more stable. Start by practicing for 5–10 minutes in a safe, open area each day.

Try This Today:

As you walk through your home, say to yourself, “Big steps, tall posture, swing your arms.” Using this simple cue can help reinforce better movement patterns.



Looking for Support?

Contact APDA to learn about local physical therapy programs and resources near you.

708.329.9527 | apdail@apdaparkinson.org

The Exercise Prescription for Parkinson's Disease

Incorporating a well-rounded exercise regimen is essential for managing PD.

The following exercise prescription encompasses four key components: aerobic exercise, resistance training, flexibility exercises, and neuromotor activities. This balanced approach aims to improve motor and non-motor symptoms, enhance overall function, and potentially slow disease progression.



FITT (Fitness, Intensity, Time, Type) Recommendations

	Aerobic	Resistance	Flexibility	Neuromotor
Frequency	3–4 days/week	2–3 days/week	2–3 days/week with daily being most effective	2–3 days/week
Intensity	High-intensity (80–85% HRmax) for mild – to – moderate PD; Moderate intensity (60–65% HRmax) for deconditioned individuals or those with more advanced PD; attempt to progress to 80%–85% HRmax	30%–60% of 1RM for beginners; 60–80% 1RM for advanced	Full extension, rotation, or stretch to the point of slight discomfort	N/A
Time	≥30 minutes accumulated high-intensity exercise (not including warm-up/cool down or rest intervals) Progress to total of 150 min/week	1–3 sets of 8–12 repetitions Progress to 2–3 hours/ week	Hold static stretch for 10–30 seconds. 2–4 repetitions of each exercise	30–60 min
Type	Prolonged, rhythmic activities using large muscle groups (e.g., walking, running, cycling, swimming, rowing, elliptical)	Major muscle groups of upper and lower body – challenging all major muscle groups on nonconsecutive days. Avoid free weights for those in advanced disease stage, use weight machines, body weight, and resistance bands instead	Slow static stretches for all major muscle groups working on increasing range of motion.	Exercises involving motor skills (e.g., balance, agility, coordination, gait, dual tasks), multidirectional step training, and instability training

*HRmax = maximum heart rate; 1RM = one repetition maximum

Source = pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11091645/table/jpd-14-jpd230277-t00

P.O. Box 2164
Naperville, IL 60567-2164

Thriving with Parkinson's: Strengthening Memory & Wellness

An APDA Illinois Parkinson's Conference

Join APDA Illinois for a morning of education, inspiration, and practical strategies for living well with Parkinson's disease. Whether you're living with Parkinson's, caring for a loved one, or simply looking to stay informed, this conference offers valuable information from leading experts.

Featured Topics

- New Insights into PD
- Managing Stress & Memory
- Brain Games for Cognitive Wellness
- Botox Treatments for PD



Monday, November 2
8:30 am - 12:00 pm

NIU Conference Center
1120 E. Diehl Rd.
Naperville, IL

Register Now!

<http://apda.link/ILcon2026>



APDA ILLINOIS CHAPTER

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LET'S CONNECT

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