Why is Exercise Important for People with Parkinson’s Disease?

Being active is a key ingredient for improving the quality of life for individuals affected by Parkinson’s Disease (PD). Exercise has been consistently identified in the literature for helping slow down the progression of Parkinson’s Disease. A few studies have cited that exercising for 30 min for 3-4 times per week demonstrated significant gains and others decreasing fall risk by 70%. It is vital to exercise to help address the effects of Parkinson’s Disease including:

1. **Imbalance**
2. **Poor posture**
3. **Fatigue**
4. **Muscle inflexibility**
5. **Muscle weakness**

There are many ways to increase your activity levels to make meaningful changes. Not only does exercise help with counteracting physical limitations, but also enhances your brain functioning. Targeted exercises help with maintaining dopamine retention in key parts of the brain that are affected by PD and increasing Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF), which is also known as “Micro-Grow” for the brain. This greatly helps with promoting neuroplasticity, which is the brain’s ability to change and adapt. It’s never too late to start exercising. Also, make sure to vary your exercise routine and make it fun to prevent boredom. Try to make big movements while taking deep breaths or speaking loudly.

**Some forms of exercise include:** Tai Chai, Aerobic: walking, swimming and biking, Yoga, Weight Training, Boxing, Dancing, Pilates, Sports Conditioning, Dual Tasking

**Resources for Parkinson's Disease:**
1. Parkinson's Disease Foundation
2. Parkinson's Foundation
3. Michael James Fox Foundation

Speak to your Neurologist or Primary Care Physician to seek out a formal rehabilitation program that involves physical, occupational and speech therapy to best fit your needs.