

# Brisk walking may improve symptoms of Parkinson's

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Credit: Vera Kratochvil/public domain

People with mild to moderate Parkinson's disease who regularly walk for exercise may improve their motor function, mood, tiredness, fitness and some aspects of thinking abilities, according to a study published in the July 2, 2014, online issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

"The results of our study suggest that walking may provide a safe and easily accessible way of improving the symptoms of Parkinson's disease and improve quality of life," said study author Ergun Y. Uc, MD, with the University of Iowa in Iowa City and the Veterans Affairs Medical Center of Iowa City. Uc is also a member of the American Academy of Neurology.

The study included 60 people who took part in sessions of walking at moderate intensity while wearing [heart rate](#) monitors three times a week for 45 minutes per session for six months. The participants also took tests that measured their motor function, aerobic fitness, mood, tiredness, and memory and thinking abilities.

The average walking speed was about 2.9 miles per hour, and participants were exercising at 47 percent of their heart rate reserve, which meets the definition of moderate intensity aerobic exercise.

The study found that brisk walking improved motor function and mood by 15 percent, attention/response control scores by 14 percent, reduced tiredness by 11 percent, and increased [aerobic fitness](#) and gait speed by seven percent. On the test of [motor function](#), participants improved by an average of 2.8 points, which is considered a clinically important difference.

"People with mild-moderate Parkinson's who do not have dementia and are able to walk independently without a cane or walker can safely follow the recommended exercise guidelines for healthy adults, which includes 150 minutes per week of [moderate intensity](#) aerobic activity, and experience benefits," said Uc. He added that these results need to be confirmed in a randomized study with a control group.

Provided by American Academy of Neurology

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