

Exercise benefits people with Parkinson's disease: study

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The sooner you start regular physical activity, the better, researchers say.

(HealthDay)—Parkinson's disease patients who begin regular exercise earlier have a much slower decline in quality of life than those who start exercising later, a new study finds.

National Parkinson Foundation (NPF) researchers looked at information from nearly 3,000 [patients](#). More than 1,300 reported doing little [regular exercise](#) before taking part in the study.

Over two years, 500 of the inactive patients began to exercise more than 2.5 hours a week. The researchers compared patients who exercised regularly for the entire two years to people who were inactive at the start of the study, but then began a regular exercise routine.

The study didn't note the type of workouts, just the total amount of exercise.

After two years, scores on a questionnaire that measured the impact of Parkinson's on daily life in a number of areas—including mood, movement and social interaction—worsened 1.4 points among those who began exercising earlier and 3.2 points among those who started exercising later.

This difference of nearly two points could be enough to make [everyday activities](#) feel harder for those not exercising, according to the authors of the study.

"This study makes it clear that everyone with Parkinson's disease should be exercising. Patients suffer when they delay starting their exercise, and it doesn't seem to matter what they do, they benefit from just getting up and moving," Dr. Michael Okun, NPF's national medical director, said in a foundation news release.

The study findings were presented recently at the International Congress of Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders in San Diego. Research presented at meetings is generally viewed as preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

More information: The U.S. National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke has more about [Parkinson's disease](#).

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