

4-PART EXERCISE MINI SERIES:

Core Strengthening Exercises for Parkinson's Diseases



**WEEK 1
FOCUS**

Spinal Flexibility



DISCLAIMER:

Always consult your physician before beginning any exercise program. This general information is not intended to replace your healthcare professional.

Consult with your physical therapist and healthcare team to design an appropriate exercise prescription. If you experience any pain or difficulty with these exercises, stop and consult your healthcare provider.



Exercise 1: Knee to Chest with a Twist



STARTING POSITION: Lying flat on your back, legs straight.

1. Pull your left knee to your chest, holding behind your knee with both hands.
2. Gently rotate your left leg to the right, putting your right hand on your left thigh.
3. Gaze over your left shoulder, reaching your left arm out and keeping your left shoulder on the floor. Let gravity pull your left knee towards the floor. Breathe deeply.

Hold twist for 5 deep breaths.

Switch and repeat on the right side.

Perform 2 times per side.



Exercise 2: PWR! Twist Prone



STARTING POSITION: Lying on your left side, head resting on the mat.

1. Bend your right knee and bring it up to hip level, knee resting on the floor. Straighten your arms in front of you, elbows straight and palms together.
2. Keeping your right knee on the floor, open your arms. Reach your top arm up toward the ceiling and then back behind you, twisting through the torso. Keep your fingers spread, elbows straight.
3. Twist your torso, aiming to touch your right shoulder to the floor. Try not to overextend your shoulder. Keep your right knee on the floor. Breathe deeply, exhaling as you twist.



4. Return to the starting position.

Repeat opening and closing your arms in a deep twist 10 times.

Switch and repeat on the opposite side.

Perform one time on each side.



Exercise 3 (Option 1): Child's Pose



STARTING POSITION: On hands and knees.

1. Line up your knees underneath and slightly wider than your hips. Press your palms into the floor, flattening your fingers against the floor and straightening your elbows.
2. Keeping your hands and knees planted, push your hips back towards your knees until you feel a gentle stretch in your low back. Push your hands into the mat. Breathe as you sink deeper into the stretch.

Hold this position for 10-30 seconds.

Repeat 2-3 times.

If this doesn't feel great on your knees, try Option 2.



Exercise 3 (Option 2): Flat Back Foldover



STARTING POSITION: Standing.

1. Stand behind a sturdy chair, hands gently resting (*not pulling*) on the back of the chair.
2. Walk your feet back, keeping them hip-width apart, until you feel you're reaching for the chair. Gently rest your hands on the back of the chair, pressing firmly down.
DO NOT PULL ON THE CHAIR.
3. Bend your knees deeply, pushing your tailbone towards the back wall. Keep your elbows straight, fingers relaxed, aiming to bring your ears between your elbows.



You should feel a stretch in your shoulders, hips, and low back. Exhale as you stretch deeper.

Hold for 10-30 seconds.

Repeat 2-3 times.



Exercise 4 (Beginner): Head and Shoulder Press in Lying



STARTING POSITION: Lying flat on your back. If your head does not touch the floor, you may put a small pillow under your head. If you have low back pain, put a small pillow under your knees.

1. When you lay down, you may feel your head fall back, pushing your chin in the air. You may also feel your shoulders round forward because of tight chest muscles and a stiff spine.



2. Open your chest and press your shoulders back towards the floor, sliding your shoulder blades underneath you. Then gently tuck your chin, elongating the back of your neck. Keeping your chin tucked, press your whole head and shoulders into the mat.

Hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat 10 times.

When you're able to comfortably get into the position above, try adding an additional challenge by doing this exercise against the wall.

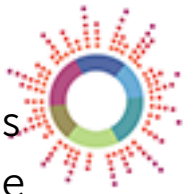


Exercise 4 (Intermediate): Head & Shoulder Press in Standing



STARTING POSITION: Standing with back flat against the wall. Try and stand as straight as possible with your back, shoulders, and head against the wall.

1. At first, you may notice you're unable to get your head flush with the wall because of rounded shoulders and a forward chin.



2. Pull your shoulders back, opening your chest, trying to slide your shoulder blades behind you. Tuck your chin, elongating the back of your neck, aiming to press the back of your head against the wall. Keep your eyes looking forward.

Hold your most upright / aligned position for 5 seconds.

Rest and repeat 10 times.



Exercise 4 (Advanced): Head and Shoulder Press in Standing with Angel Wings



STARTING POSITION: Standing with back flat against the wall, hands against the wall with palms forward. Try and stand as straight as possible with your back, shoulders, and head against the wall.

1. Pull your shoulders back, opening your chest, trying to slide your shoulder blades behind you. Tuck your chin, elongating the back of your neck, aiming to press the back of your head against the wall. Keep your eyes looking forward.



2. Slowly slide your arms out like wings, maintaining your best alignment in your shoulders and neck. Keep the back of your hands against the wall and open your chest as you slide your hands as high as possible. Slowly return them to the starting position.

Perform 10 "*angel wings*" without letting your head or shoulders leave the wall.
Rest and perform a 2nd set of 10.