

**The Victory Summit® Virtual Event: Care Partners
Occupational Therapy Exercises That You Can Do With Your Person With Parkinson's**

Recorded on November 13, 2021

Davis Phinney Foundation

Amber Crawford, COTA/L (Occupational Therapy Assistant, Ada Therapy Services, PLLC):

So we're going to get up and move around a little bit. First of all, if you are at home and you are a fall risk, if you have any chance that you could be injured or hurt yourself during this, please don't do it. Make sure you have someone next to you or do them seated. I'll try and show you some of them seated. But the first thing I want to talk about is posture. We all have posture problems. I was just looking at pillows this morning for my neck pain. So I want to show you some stretches. These are some things that you could do with your care partner and your loved one, maybe every morning or at lunchtime or something. It should take about three minutes. Each one is about 30 seconds long. So one of the things that is a concern for us when we are talking about people with Parkinson's again, that stooped posture, right?

So we see a lot of this, all right. Our body's natural reaction is to start going inward. So when we get into that state of flexion, think about walking, where is it? Where am I looking at? I'm looking at my feet, which that's a no-no, when we walk, we don't look at our feet. We look at our environment around us. So we want to bring that posture back to here. Okay. We want to have our head up and be looking forward. So the first one I'm going to show you is pretty simple. Anybody can do this with, using a wall and again, if you need to stay seated for this, you can do this in a chair. Maybe not quite as effective, but still works. So you're going to stand up against a wall. And the goal is to have your heels, your butt, your shoulder blades, and your head, all touching at the same time and you'll kind of do that wing shape with your shoulder blades, where you're feel like you're trying to pinch something back there. And what this is going to do is it's going to open up your chest and stretch these neck muscles. Now, if you're not already in that stooped posture, this might not seem that difficult. However, you can ask the people that are like this, that's not an easy thing to do. Okay. So now we're going to go through the six stretches for just your neck. I'm actually going to sit down and do these ones.

Okay. So the first one that we're going to do is we are just going to look side to side, and we want good posture through this whole thing. So keep your shoulders square and you're looking forward. And for all of these neck exercises, we're going to hold onto our chest right here, because our bodies have a tendency to kind of cheat a little bit. And if your chest is stretching, then your neck muscles aren't going to be as much. Okay. So we're holding on and we're just going to go side to side. And where you should feel this stretch is right here. So you have this muscle, it's your sternocleidomastoid, I'm sure I butchered that, it is connected to your

sternum, your clavicle, and your mastoid process back behind your jaw. When we get this posture, what actually happens is those muscles get trunk up. This is kind of gross, but I think about like like beef jerky, it goes from being like this big to this big, it shrinks. So as you can imagine, you're being held like this. So that's that muscle right here.

Okay. The next one that we're going to do is up and down. So we're just going to look up and look down as far as you can go, holding down those chest muscles. Again, I'm feeling a lot of stretch here. Not as much in the back of my neck, but a lot in the front. Okay. The third one, you're gonna look a little funny doing these. So the third one, I call it the chicken. So you're going to go forward and back. So this angle you go out and back. You're going to have a few chins when you do this one.

Good. Okay. This one's the hardest one. The video I originally watched, they called it the Janet Jackson. I don't have much rhythm. So you hold onto your chest and you're going to try and just move your head. Okay. This one is actually targeting these muscles that are in the back that connect to the base of your skull. So it's kind of a weird feeling. You actually feel it like on the inside of your scapulars. Okay. This one's my favorite. I really feel this one. So hold onto your chest. And you're gonna put your head to the side, when you're doing this, you're not thinking about bringing your ear to your shoulder, you're thinking about bringing this ear as high as you can. So we're trying to bring it as far up to the ceiling as we can. And then switch. Again, this one, you should feel the side of the neck and you even feel at some in your traps.

Okay. And the last one, again, holding on, we're just going to do a half circle, so you're going to go forwards. Okay. All right. Good. So again, three minutes a day, and that could really increase your loved one's visual acuity, could help your neck pain. Good for everyone. Okay. So I want to show you guys a trick. So those transfers, one of my favorite exercises to have my patients do, who have pretty much any kind of physical diagnosis related to aging at all, is sit to stand practice. So whenever I'm trying to get up from a chair, if I'm leaning back and I have my legs, see if I can kind of tilt this down so you can see my feet.

If I have my feet kind of spread out in front of me, I'm leaning back. I have all the things working against me. Gravity's not going to help me here. I'm not helping my care partner. If they try to pull me from this position, they're gonna hurt themselves. So a few simple steps. First thing is you say, scoot forward, you're gonna come up to the edge of the chair, not to the point where it's tipping, but to the point where you're just barely on it, you're going to bring your feet back. You want your feet behind your knees. So when I look down, I shouldn't be able to see my toes. I should only see my knees and carpet. Now, if you had a Walker, you had a grab bar or something like that, you would hold on somewhere differently, but we're going to hold on right here.



So we're going to push ourselves up. Now, this is the trick. When you are going to stand up, the only thing you need to do from this position is lean forward. Don't believe me, try. So from here, we're just going to lean forward, put the weight on your toes. Once you get to a certain spot, you'll feel kind of gravity shift you. And then it's really easy to just pop up because all you have to do is use your knees, all you have to do straighten them. So you're going to push yourself forward, nose over toes. And as you get to the point where you can feel gravity shift to your toes, then you're going to straighten your knees. And this works really well whenever you have a gait belt on someone. So you want to put the gait belt right around here, where their center of gravity is at.

Okay. If I'm leaning forward, I'm putting my center of gravity forward and it's pulling my bottom up off of that chair. Okay. So we're using that gravity to our advantage.

Want to Watch a Recording of the Webinar?

You can access the recording [here](#).

Want More Practical Articles Like This?

Much more can be found in the Every Victory Counts® manual. It's packed with up-to-date information about everything Parkinson's, plus an expanded worksheets and resources section to help you put what you've learned into action.

[Request Your Manual Now](#)

Thank you to our Peak Partners, Amneal, Adamas, Sunovion, and Kyowa Kirin, for making it possible for us to print, distribute, and ship the Every Victory Counts manual.