



September 2025

## Dear Members,

We've certainly had a long, wet and rather miserable winter! Weather like this reminds us how important it is to stay connected and make sure everyone in our community feels safe and supported.

To help with this, we're starting a new **"Buddy Group."** The idea is simple: each buddy will keep in touch with around 10 members, mainly with a friendly weekly phone call, just to check in and see how things are going. Some groups may even choose to meet up in person now and then for a chat over a cuppa.

We're hoping to have about 10 buddies in total and are looking for volunteers to join. If you'd like to become a buddy, please email Dick at **1942dbabb@gmail.com**.

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## Last Meeting

Our last gathering was our **annual concert**, which drew a fantastic crowd of around 90 people. While we were sad that Angela Hogan couldn't perform due to illness, we were incredibly lucky to have the talented tenor **Matthew Reardon** step in, thanks to the Parkin family.

Matthew not only impressed us with his wonderful voice but also with his warm, engaging personality – he was a true entertainer! The concert was a great success, made even more special by the delicious Devonshire/morning tea prepared by Danielle, Dot, Jenni and their wonderful helpers.

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## Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on **Friday, 5th September, 10.00am–12noon** at the **Mount Colah Community Centre**.

Our guest speaker will be **Ashley Bower** from the **Seniors Rights Service**, a community organisation that works to protect and support the rights of older people in NSW.

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## Websites to Explore

Here are a few online resources we recommend:

- To sing and exercise at home:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKkGoUYruEo>

- Parkinson's research updates: [news@shakeitup.org.au](mailto:news@shakeitup.org.au)
  - General information and support: [Parkinson's NSW](http://www.parkinsonsnsw.org.au) - <https://www.parkinsonsnsw.org.au>
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## Reminders

- **Membership fees** (\$25.00 for 2025/26) are now due.
  - Our **AGM is coming up next month**, and we're looking for members to step into committee roles. Please consider how you might be able to help keep our association strong and thriving.
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## **FIVE STEPS TO LIVING WELL**

Receiving a Parkinson's disease (PD) diagnosis can feel overwhelming. This life-changing news can leave you unsure of your next step. As you begin processing your emotions, which can be wide-ranging, it's important to know you are not alone. The Parkinson's Foundation is here for you at every stage of your journey. We offer the community, resources and advice to support you – and your family – as you begin to build a better life with Parkinson's disease.

For some, a Parkinson's diagnosis comes as a relief; an explanation for previously unexplained symptoms. Others may be stunned, struggling with what the future may look like. Take time to understand how Parkinson's can impact you physically and how it can impact your mood and emotions. Taking control of the things you can will minimize stress and improve well-being. These five steps, in any order, can help you begin to live well with PD.

- **Determine your personal goals and priorities.**
- **Find someone you can talk to and stay connected.**
- **Create healthy habits.**
- **Be active in whatever way works best for you.**
- **Find a doctor who is an expert in Parkinson's disease.**

### **DETERMINE YOUR GOALS**

As you begin to build your life after a Parkinson's disease (PD) diagnosis, setting clear personal goals then acting on them can help you live well. Empower yourself by thinking about what is most meaningful to you, then work those activities into your routine. Don't try to do everything at once. Focus your energy where it best serves you.

#### **Start Small**

Begin by setting a viable, realistic goal. Be specific. Mastering a short-term aspiration can be key to enduring success. One victory can spur the next.

Rather than saying: "I'm going to learn more about Parkinson's," be precise; instead commit to reading a free educational PD book.

#### **Take Doable Steps**

Outline an action plan based on your goal, then take small, steady moves toward achievement.

For example, one of your goals might be to connect with others living with PD. Discover what support groups are available in your area as your first step. Then plan to attend a meeting.

#### **Involve Others**

Connecting with family and friends over your goal can help you stay on-task and inspired. Those trying to become more active, for example, can ask an active friend or relative for encouragement. Maybe you have a child or neighbor who runs twice a week. Ask them to text you whenever they head out, encouraging you to run that day, too.

### **Pinpoint Priorities**

Ask yourself why you want to accomplish this goal. Understanding how your aim fits into the big picture may keep you motivated. Make sure your target ties into what really matters to you. For example, a goal like the one above, exercising with someone you care about, can also help you begin opening the lines of communication and building a support network, steps that foster emotional well-being.

### **Follow Through**

Concentrate on one goal at a time and set a specific time for when you'd like to complete the goal. For example, if you want to attend an exercise class, make your goal to go to the class scheduled for this month. Or if you'd like to improve your sleep, maybe your goal can be to "unplug" from electronic devices an hour before bedtime for one week.

### **Stay Inspired**

Change can be hard. Reward yourself when you've mastered a challenge. One success can help lead you on to your next achievement, helping you continue doing the things you love and care about.

## **FIND SOMEONE TO TALK TO**

Connection is vital to living well with Parkinson's disease (PD). You are not alone. It is important to find someone you can talk to. Caring for your emotional health is as important as addressing your physical symptoms. A Parkinson's diagnosis can bring on a flood of emotions, including anger, grief and denial. Successfully navigating those feelings requires support. Be open and honest about your experience with PD.

### **Build Bonds**

Mood changes can make Parkinson's symptoms worse. This impacts daily living. While your doctor can recommend the right medical treatments, finding someone to talk to can provide connection, comfort and understanding. A counselor or PD support group can provide opportunities to talk about shared experiences and can prevent isolation. This can relieve stress and build new friendships. Counseling can also provide additional opportunities to process the changes you are experiencing and all the emotions that come along with managing your new diagnosis and Parkinson's disease.

### **Discover Community**

The Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Parkinson's Association community connects through discussion at our monthly meetings. Here, people can share their feelings, opinions and experience.

### **Get Connected**

Reading about the experiences of other people with Parkinson's and learning more about your Parkinson's diagnosis can help as you begin to process your experience.

## **CREATE HEALTHY HABITS**

A healthy diet and ample self-care are key to living well with Parkinson's disease (PD). Good [nutrition](#) can improve medication delivery and plenty of rest improves mood.

### **Nutrition**

Small changes can make a big difference. Try to make one dietary change at a time. [The right foods](#) can improve your energy, keep your bones strong, fight [constipation](#) and help maintain your health. There is no precise diet for Parkinson's. But good nutrition goes a long way. Most people living with Parkinson's should eat a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, milk and dairy products and protein-rich foods, such as meat and beans. Fats from nuts, olive oil, fish and eggs are also beneficial. [Planning healthy meals](#) in advance can simplify daily living.

### **Sleep**

Restful [sleep](#) is especially important for people with Parkinson's. Getting enough sleep is key to managing mood, health and PD symptoms. [Create a sleep strategy](#) that includes a regular sleep schedule and bedtime routine to ensure adequate rest. A dark, cool, quiet and electronic screen-free sleeping environment will also maximize rest.

PD medications and symptoms can [disrupt sleep](#). Your doctor can help with strategies to mitigate Parkinson's-related sleep problems.

## **BE ACTIVE**

Mounting evidence shows that exercise is essential to managing Parkinson's disease (PD). Creating a fitness routine soon after your diagnosis is key to living well. Regular physical activity can improve many PD symptoms and also offer a neuroprotective effect. Research shows exercise helps people with Parkinson's improve or better manage:

- Depression and anxiety
- Coordination
- Gait and balance
- Flexibility and posture
- Motor coordination
- Working memory and decision making
- Attention and concentration
- Quality of sleep
- Do What You Love

An exercise program should be enjoyable. It should also include stretching, aerobic and strength activities.

Experts recommend exercising consistently, frequently and with intensity for people with young-onset or those in the early stages of PD, to reap the greatest benefits. Talk with your doctor and a physical therapist before making big changes to your exercise routine to confirm your chosen exercises are safe for you.

### **Join a Group**

Seek out a local PD-specific exercise class, such as yoga, dance or non-contact boxing. These classes offer community along with activity.

Our support extends to individuals with Parkinson's disease as well as their families and friends. The programs we offer are:-

- Weekly exercise classes
- Weekly choir sessions
- Weekly walking group

In addition, we host monthly meetings featuring guest speakers who provide valuable information related to Parkinson's. We also publish a monthly newsletter and send regular emails with updates on research and tips to improve quality of life. Our social events include a BBQ at Bobbin Head and an annual Christmas party.

## **FIND A PARKINSON'S EXPERT**

Finding a doctor who is an expert in Parkinson's disease (PD) can help you get the best possible care. Look for a neurologist, a doctor who works with brain and central nervous system conditions such as Parkinson's. When possible, a movement disorder specialist — a neurologist with additional training to treat people with Parkinson's at every stage of the disease — can be a key addition to a quality care team.

Neurologists with Parkinson's expertise and movement disorder specialists can often recommend other healthcare professionals who can help treat day-to-day challenges. A holistic, team-based care approach can help you live well with PD.

### **Expert Care**

These include neurologists, movement disorder specialists, physical and occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, mental health professionals such as social workers and others who keep current in the latest Parkinson's treatments.

### **Team Approach**

Once you have nearby neurologist or movement disorders specialist to help manage your PD, you may want to begin building a broader healthcare team. When possible, assembling medically diverse experts to work with you in managing your PD symptoms can optimise your well-being.

## **THOUGHT OF MONTH**

The greater part of our happiness or misery depends on our disposition and not our circumstances. —Martha Washington

## **JOKE OF THE MONTH**

Olle was on his deathbed. The house was quiet, and he closed his eyes, but just as he was about to drift into oblivion, he smelled the most delicious aroma coming from downstairs.

"That smells like one of Lena's rhubarb pies," Olle thought to himself, and his mouth started watering. Summoning all his strength, he sat up in bed for the first time in days. He hoisted his legs over the side of the bed. With his feet on the floor, he braced his hands along the wall and made his way to the stairs.

Making his way down the stairs for the first time in weeks was no easy feat, but from here the smell was stronger and the promise of delicious pie urged him on. He made his way down and into the kitchen.

Lena wasn't there, but the rhubarb pie was cooling on the kitchen counter. It smelled amazing, and some steam was still rising from it. Olle hobbled to the cupboard and took out a plate and a fork, set them next to the pie, then took a knife from the drawer.

Lena returned just as Olle was about to cut a slice. She slapped the back of his hand, saying "Don't you dare! That's for the funeral!"

## **Dick and the Team**

