



PARKINSON'S^{UK}
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Supporting people with Parkinson's through golf coaching

Key information for you to consider when working with people diagnosed with Parkinson's

What is Parkinson's?

A neurodegenerative condition with three main physical symptoms:

- slow movement
- stiff and inflexible muscles
- involuntary shaking of particular parts of the body ([tremor](#))

A person with Parkinson's disease can also experience a wide range of other physical and psychological symptoms.

- balance problems (this may increase the chances of a fall, especially if the ground is uneven, or when they are attempting to turn round)
- Slowness to process new information. This just makes it important to repeat new points until it has been understood correctly
- memory problems or poor concentration
- A frequent need to use the bathroom to urinate



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What should you consider in your coaching?

- Speak to the person and not their disability, to learn how they feel the condition affects them; don't make assumptions about Parkinson's
- Concentrate on what they can do rather than what they can not do
- Allow those you are coaching to share information on their condition without judgement
- Reassure and keep things positively focussed
- Use the STEP approach in setting up your coaching activity
- Have a clear idea of how they respond to medication, as some people appear less mobile, a little more anxious or have less concentration if they are due a tablet in the next 30 minutes or so

With regards the main symptoms:

- a) The stiffness and inflexibility is particularly prevalent in the muscles on one side of the trunk and shoulders. This affects the rotatory component and lift of the arms to position the club ready to create a strong downward swing.
- b) For some, the slowness reduces the speed of the drive, as the generation of power is dependent on speed.
- c) A tremor whilst probably the most noticeable symptom, creates the least physical issue, as it usually disappears during voluntary movement.
- d) In people with a problem called 'freezing', where smooth body movement or speech can appear to faulty and stammering, this may affect safety when walking around the links, but also, some people report the movement comes to a stop when they try to contact the ball during putting. They are fine when practicing an imaginary shot, but the point of ball contact can have a stopping effect on the actual shot. This is overcome with practice and the addition of cues e.g. to state the process of the swing out loud as they perform the action.