# Steve Webber’s journey highlights how sports ease Parkinson’s symptoms and boost wellbeing



Steve Webber, a man living with Parkinson's disease, has discovered the transformative power of sports, participating in activities ranging from pickleball to table tennis. He is part of a pilot project at Cirencester Leisure Centre, funded by Cotswold District Council, which aims to encourage more individuals with Parkinson's to take up sports. For Webber, these activities have made "life itself more bearable," allowing him to manage his symptoms more effectively through interaction with fellow players and shared experiences.

Kevin Young, chairman of the Cirencester and Stroud branch of Parkinson's UK, states that engaging in sports allows individuals with Parkinson's to focus more on their activities rather than their symptoms. This shift in attention can transform their experience, as symptoms become "less of an issue." His comments highlight an important aspect of many therapies: the mental engagement provided by sports can enhance both physical and psychological well-being.

The benefits of exercise for individuals with Parkinson's disease are well documented. Research indicates that regular physical activity can improve motor symptoms, boost mobility, and enhance cognitive functions. Studies suggest that exercise may even have neuroprotective effects, potentially slowing the progression of the disease. Establishing exercise routines early is recognised as a critical component of managing Parkinson's effectively, creating a holistic approach to treatment.

Activities such as boxing, tai chi, and dancing have been shown to be particularly beneficial. These sports address specific symptoms of Parkinson's, like balance and coordination, while also enhancing mood and social interaction. For instance, a comprehensive evaluation by the American Physical Therapy Association lists several sports that can aid individuals with Parkinson's, urging consultation with a physical therapist to tailor activities to individual needs.

Moreover, the multifaceted benefits of sports extend beyond physical health. Participating in sports can lead to improved mental well-being, better sleep quality, and reduced stress, all of which contribute to a more fulfilling life for those affected. Enhanced cardiovascular health, increased flexibility, and higher levels of social support are additional gains associated with regular participation in sports, as highlighted by various studies focused on the topic.

The positive impact of sports is further supported by insights from the Parkinson's Foundation, which underscores the importance of integrating various exercise types into regimens. Their guidance encourages incorporating strength training, aerobic activities, balance, and flexibility exercises, promoting comprehensive health management strategies for individuals with Parkinson's.

In essence, both the personal experiences of individuals like Webber and broader scientific recommendations underscore the vital role that sports can play in the lives of those with Parkinson’s disease. By actively engaging in physical activities, individuals not only confront the challenges posed by the condition but also foster a stronger sense of community, resilience, and improved quality of life. The encouragement to participate in sports serves as a call to action for more people living with Parkinson's to explore the enriching opportunities available to them.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckg7vk5gmr3o)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckg7vk5gmr3o)
3. Paragraph 3: [[2]](https://www.parkinson.org/library/fact-sheets/exercise)
4. Paragraph 4: [[3]](https://www.choosept.com/health-tips/6-sports-parkinson-disease)
5. Paragraph 5: [[4]](https://www.rosycheeked.com/wellness/the-benefits-of-sports-for-people-with-parkinsons-disease/)
6. Paragraph 6: [[5]](https://activeability.com.au/exercise-physiology/parkinsons/)
7. Paragraph 7: [[6]](https://www.parkinson.org/living-with-parkinsons/treatment/exercise)
8. Paragraph 8: [[7]](https://parkinsonseurope.org/2022/01/06/from-nordic-walking-to-boxing-six-sports-for-parkinsons-disease/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckg7vk5gmr3o> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.parkinson.org/library/fact-sheets/exercise> - This article from the Parkinson's Foundation emphasizes the importance of exercise for individuals with Parkinson's disease (PD). It highlights that engaging in physical activity can improve motor symptoms, balance, mobility, and even cognitive functions. The piece also notes that exercise may have a protective effect on the brain and can help slow the progression of the disease. Establishing early exercise habits is recommended as a vital component of overall PD management.
3. <https://www.choosept.com/health-tips/6-sports-parkinson-disease> - This resource from the American Physical Therapy Association outlines six sports beneficial for people with Parkinson's disease. The activities include boxing, cycling, tai chi, dancing, karate, and weight training. Each sport is described in terms of how it can help improve specific symptoms of PD, such as balance, coordination, strength, and mood. The article encourages individuals with PD to consult with a physical therapist to determine the most appropriate sport for their needs.
4. <https://www.rosycheeked.com/wellness/the-benefits-of-sports-for-people-with-parkinsons-disease/> - This article discusses various benefits of sports for individuals with Parkinson's disease. It covers enhanced balance and stability, increased flexibility and range of motion, boosted mood and mental health, neuroprotection, improved cardiovascular health, increased cognitive function, better sleep quality, stress reduction, and increased social interaction and support. The piece emphasizes that engaging in sports activities can significantly improve the overall quality of life for those with PD.
5. <https://activeability.com.au/exercise-physiology/parkinsons/> - This article from Active Ability focuses on the benefits of exercise physiology for people with Parkinson's disease. It highlights improvements in balance, posture, sleep quality, mental well-being, and social connectedness. The piece emphasizes that regular exercise can enhance energy levels, reduce fatigue, and improve overall physical and mental health for individuals with PD.
6. <https://www.parkinson.org/living-with-parkinsons/treatment/exercise> - This resource from the Parkinson's Foundation discusses the role of exercise in managing Parkinson's disease. It outlines the importance of incorporating aerobic activity, strength training, balance, agility, multitasking, and stretching into an exercise regimen. The article provides guidelines for frequency, intensity, time, type, volume, and progression of exercises that are safe and effective for people with PD.
7. <https://parkinsonseurope.org/2022/01/06/from-nordic-walking-to-boxing-six-sports-for-parkinsons-disease/> - This article from Parkinson's Europe explores six sports beneficial for individuals with Parkinson's disease: dancing, Nordic walking, yoga, cycling, table tennis, and boxing. Each sport is discussed in terms of how it can help improve specific symptoms of PD, such as balance, coordination, flexibility, and mood. The piece encourages individuals with PD to consider incorporating these activities into their routines to enhance their quality of life.