

WALKING WITH PURPOSE: MARTIN'S INSPIRING OPTIMISM



Martin Richter, PD warrior since 2013

When Martin Richter was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease (PD) in 2013, it felt like the world had caved in. Like many newly diagnosed individuals, he struggled with what the future might hold. But Martin made a choice to fight back.

Martin's symptoms began subtly: reduced handwriting, a shuffling walk, tremors, and changes in his speech. After receiving his diagnosis, he began treatment with carbidopa/levodopa, which immediately helped ease his symptoms.

Encouraged by a *60 Minutes* segment featuring Leslie Stahl and her husband's experience with PD and how boxing was helping his quality of life, Martin was urged by his three children and his partner to look into Rock Steady Boxing. Despite a long drive to the boxing program at NYIT (a former APDA Information & Referral Center),

Martin joined and found the program transformative. "It significantly slowed the progressive aspects of PD," he shares. He continues boxing to this day — now also training in Sarasota, Florida.

Participating in Parkinson's programs and events builds friendships and community. The bonds you create are a real positive.

Martin Richter

Martin's drive to stay active and connected led him to the APDA Long Island Optimism Walk. Embracing the spirit of teamwork, he joined the event four years ago as part of NYIT's Rock Steady team. Year after year, Martin ranks among the event's top fundraisers, having raised more than \$35,000 to date to support APDA's mission. And he's gearing up to do it all again this October!

The enthusiasm from his children, grandchildren, siblings, and others has made a big difference. His secret to successful fundraising? "Getting

your whole family involved in the fundraising makes it more effective," he says. "The more people we collectively ask, the more money we can raise."

After a career that brought him to places like Japan, Vietnam, France, and Italy, Martin now splits his time between Long Island, NY; Sarasota, FL; and New York City. But no matter where he is, he brings his energy and optimism with him.

Martin is walking proof that when you fight back — and walk forward — with optimism, you can make a real impact.

If you'd like to follow in Martin's footsteps and join the APDA Long Island Optimism Walk (or another Optimism Walk near you) visit apdaparkinson.org/optimism-walks and register today.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO

Dear Friend,

As we embrace the warmth of summer, I want to express my heartfelt

thanks for your unwavering support. Your generosity enables us to provide hope, care, and strength to those living with Parkinson's disease.

In this edition of *Insights*, we delve deeper into the importance of exercise while living with PD, highlight the unexpected early signs of PD, and share just how vital your contributions are in advancing our mission. I'm especially excited to share Martin's story and his dedication as a fundraiser for APDA Optimism Walks.

I'm incredibly proud of the transformative progress we're making together, and it's all thanks to your kindness. I'm eager to see what we can accomplish in the coming months.

Warm regards,



Leslie A. Chambers
President & CEO

American Parkinson Disease Association



MOVE MORE, FEEL BETTER: THE POWER OF EXERCISE FOR PARKINSON'S

Exercise is one of the most powerful tools available to people living with Parkinson's. It can help improve balance, flexibility, strength, and overall quality of life — and emerging research shows it might even help slow the progression of PD.

A groundbreaking study called SPARX3 (Study in Parkinson's Disease of Exercise Phase 3, which is supported in part by APDA and donors like you) is exploring whether high-intensity aerobic exercise can have a disease-modifying effect. Early results are promising, reinforcing what we've seen anecdotally for years: consistent, vigorous exercise can make a real difference.

Exercise studies also reveal that people with PD can improve in the following areas:

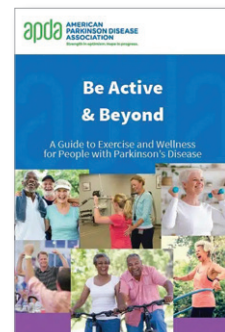
- Strength
- Mobility
- Endurance
- Walking ability
- Balance
- Flexibility

At APDA, we're passionate about helping people with PD get moving safely and effectively. If you're not sure how to begin, we have you covered. Download our free **Be Active & Beyond** exercise booklet — designed specifically for people with PD to help you build an exercise routine that works for you. Visit apdaparkinson.org/BeActive to get your free copy!

We also offer a wide variety of **online exercise classes** led by trained professionals, so you can join from the comfort of your own home (visit apdaparkinson.org/events for the schedule). Prefer to work out in person? Contact the APDA chapter near you to see if there's a PD exercise program in your area or contact us at apda@apdaparkinson.org for assistance.

No matter your level of mobility or experience, it's never too late to start moving. Exercise cannot cure Parkinson's, but it can empower you to take control of your health, stay strong, and help you live life to the fullest.

Get started today — your body and brain will thank you.



HOW TO SPOT THE EARLY SIGNS OF PARKINSON'S

It's true that PD is often associated with motor symptoms like tremors and stiffness. However, some of the earliest signs may be entirely non-motor. In fact, symptoms such as depression,

constipation, loss of smell, sleep disturbances, or behavior disorders can appear years or even *decades* before motor symptoms begin. This early, "pre-motor" phase of PD is transforming how researchers view diagnosis and treatment.

Scientists now know that changes in the brain, including the buildup of alpha-synuclein proteins, begin in areas that control non-motor functions before spreading to motor regions. New breakthroughs in biomarker testing are helping to detect these changes earlier than ever before.

Although routine screening for early signs of PD isn't yet standard due to the lack of treatments that slow or prevent disease progression, there is hope. Researchers are actively studying individuals with only non-motor symptoms to better identify those who may benefit from early interventions. If you or a loved one is experiencing early signs of PD — motor or non-motor — speak with a neurologist. You can read more on this topic at apdaparkinson.org/EarlyPD.



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT APDA

Join us for an Optimism Walk!



We've got a full lineup of APDA Optimism Walks this fall, and like Martin (see story on opposite side), we'd love for you to be part of the fun! These inspiring events bring together the PD community for a day filled with connection, encouragement, and family-friendly activities. Rally your friends, family, and neighbors to start a team — or come solo and meet some amazing people when you arrive. Check out apdaparkinson.org/optimism-walks to find a Walk near you!

Stay active and connected this fall wherever you are!



If you haven't explored our calendar of virtual programs yet, now's the perfect time! From high-energy fitness classes to calming yoga and tai chi to vocal workshops and educational webinars — APDA has a robust lineup this fall to keep you moving, connected, and informed. No matter where you live, you can join right from home. Just head to apdaparkinson.org/events, filter by program type or month, and find what fits your schedule.

SLEEP DISTURBANCES





“ASK THE DOCTOR”

with Dr. Rebecca Gilbert

Q. My mother was just prescribed carbidopa/levodopa and she has been incredibly sleepy since she started it. Could this be because of the medication?

A. Carbidopa/levodopa can definitely cause fatigue, and your mother may be experiencing this side effect from the medication. When this happens, and the side effect of the medication causes more trouble than the positive benefits of the medication, then it makes sense to consider making a change. One strategy that may help is switching to a longer-acting carbidopa/levodopa, such as Sinemet® CR, Rytary®, or Crexont®. It is possible that fatigue from the medication will not be as profound with one of the other formulations of carbidopa/levodopa.

Q. My partner was diagnosed with PD four years ago. Her main issue is bloating and belly pain, which negatively affects her quality of life in a very profound way. What can we do to improve this?

A. These symptoms could be due to a non-motor symptom of PD called gastroparesis or slowed transit through the stomach/upper gut. Here are some lifestyle modifications that may help: eating small frequent meals, avoiding fatty foods, and walking/moving after eating. In some cases, a medication called prucalopride (Motegrity) can be tried to enhance the motility of the upper gut. Constipation must also be treated because when the lower gut doesn't move well, the upper gut doesn't move well either.

Dr. Rebecca Gilbert is the Chief Mission Officer at APDA. She oversees APDA's research portfolio in conjunction with APDA's Scientific Advisory Board. She also provides medical and clinical expertise to support APDA programming as well as print and web content.



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Have You Been Diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease?

Do You Know or Care for Someone Who Has?

The goal of the **REGENERATE-PD** study is to test whether a new gene therapy (AB-1005) is safe and effective for patients with PD. This therapy aims to introduce working GDNF to your brain, which promotes the survival of brain cells.

For more information about the **REGENERATE-PD** study, please contact AskFirst@askbio.com, scan the QR code, or go to ClinicalTrials.gov/study/NCT06285643.



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For more information, or to learn about the many ways you can support APDA, visit our website at apdaparkinson.org/Renewal or call (800) 223-2732.