

# Parkinson's Disease

Practical Workplace Adaptations

## What is Parkinson's Disease?

Parkinson's disease is a progressive movement disorder where symptoms become worse over time and can affect the ability to perform common daily activities. It is characterized by three motor symptoms: tremors, stiffness or rigidity of the muscles, and slowness of movement.<sup>1</sup>



It is characterized by three motor symptoms:

Tremors

Stiffness or rigidity of the muscles

Slowness of movement

## What is an Adaptation?

An adaptation is a large or small change made to the home and work environments. Adaptations can help you live and work independently for a longer period of time.

If it is becoming challenging to do everyday tasks, simple changes can prevent accidents and minimize injury.

### Small Adaptations Include:

- Remove or level threshold strips between doorways
- Create half steps to make large steps smaller
- Install a second banister to a staircase/ladder
- Use thin non-slip rugs in common work areas
- Make sure your workbench, or any working space, is at an ergonomic level
- Switch faucets and doorknobs to ones that are easier to grasp
- Use raised chairs that are easier to get in and out of
- Declutter floors to make sure pathways are clear to walk through

### Large Adaptations Include:

- Install ramps to eliminate the use of stairs
- Resurface the working space terrain to concrete or tar
- Add more lighting to low-lit areas



## Who should I go to for help?

It is always important to first talk to your doctor about the challenges and changes you encounter when completing daily tasks. This enables a doctor to determine which services may be beneficial for you. A common referral to receive is a home or workplace assessment performed by an occupational therapist.

➔ Additional resources found at: [American Parkinson's Disease Association](https://www.parkinson.org)

### References:

1. Employment with Parkinson's disease: Working it out [PDF] (2019). *Parkinson's Foundation*. Retrieved from: [https://www.parkinson.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Employment-With-Parkinsons\\_O.pdf](https://www.parkinson.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Employment-With-Parkinsons_O.pdf)
2. American Parkinson's Disease Association [APDA] (n.d.). Parkinson's Disease: What is it, and how does it affect those who've been diagnosed?, *American Parkinson's Disease Association*. <https://www.apdaparkinson.org/what-is-parkinsons/>

[umash.umn.edu/physical-health](https://umash.umn.edu/physical-health)