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The **Parkinson's Post** is published by the Northwest Parkinson's Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

Our mission is to establish optimal quality of life for the Northwest Parkinson's community through awareness, education, advocacy and care.

We welcome your comments on this newsletter and all our activities.



NORTHWEST
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Finding wellness in the water

BY JILL BARVILLE

The pool is warm, the light dim, the music soft. With smooth intonation, the instructor quietly cues each move, simple and serene. Standing chest depth with near weightless floating, muscles unclench while tightness and tension drift away in the soft ripples created by each slow, rounded movement and each exhaled breath.

The *ai chi* class moves together with the graceful beauty of an underwater dance, yet each person is alone in buoyant balance.

Ai chi, which is pronounced “eye-chee” and means flowing energy, was created in Japan in the 1980s by Jun Konno. *Ai chi* combines the mind-body benefits typical of East Asian exercises with the physiological benefits of warm-water immersion.

The movements—there are only 16 positions—are simple, making it accessible to almost anyone, with increased benefit from repetition and practice as concentration goes from form to breathing to mind-body awareness.

Ai chi classes are offered to the Spokane, WA, community by Patty Murphy, assistant aquatic director for Whitworth University and a certified *ai chi* instructor—but *ai chi* is also a therapeutic technique practiced by some physical therapists and covered by some insurance companies, in part because of

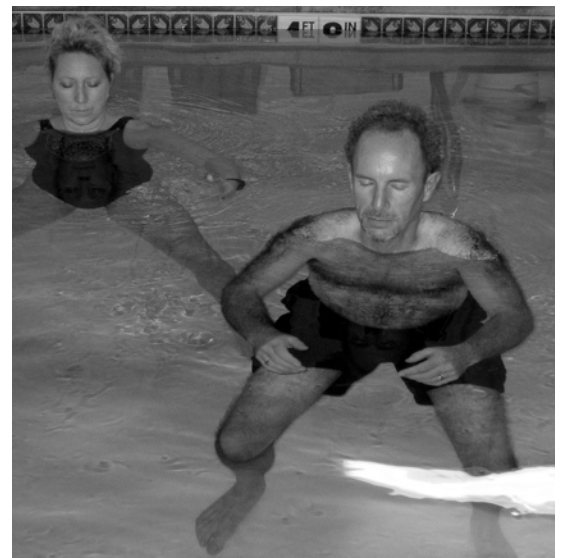


Photo by Whitney Tampien

Pat Murphy (right) of Spokane, WA, was diagnosed with Parkinson's at age 50. Aquatic exercises allow him to continue being active out of the water as well. Murphy's hobbies include mountain biking, hiking and fishing. He is the husband of *ai chi* instructor Patty Murphy, interviewed in this story.

its health benefits for a variety of ailments. “If you only get in the water and breathe, you will benefit,” Murphy said.

“Immersion to shoulder depth, like is happening with *ai chi*, does a bunch of interesting things,” said Bruce Becker, M.D., former medical director at St. Luke's Rehabilitation Institute and a Washington State University research professor who is studying the physiology of aquatic activity.

“*Ai chi* is not aerobic at all,” Becker said. However, “Because of water immersion, it has a lot to compare with aerobic exercise from the heart stand-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Exercise tackles postural problems in Parkinson's and osteoporosis

By **Lori Newell, MA, CPT, RYT**

While there are exercises that can address the symptoms of both Parkinson's disease and osteoporosis, there are a few major differences to take into consideration if you are dealing with both medical conditions.

Addressing postural changes

Having Parkinson's can cause changes to the body, some of which are postural. There can be a rounding of the upper back and the shoulders, with increased forward bending at the hips.

This change in posture can lead to tightened chest muscles and over-stretched and weakened upper back muscles. Uncorrected, the changes can lead to chronic back pain, restricted movement in the trunk and shoulders, and decreased lung capacity. This posture can also increase your likelihood of falling because your weight is unbalanced.

Osteoporosis, a condition in which the bones become frail and prone to breaks, can also cause postural changes. However, a major difference is that in Parkinson's the changes are muscular in nature.

With osteoporosis postural changes can be just muscular, but they may also be caused by compression fractures, which are tiny fractures in the vertebrae. The best way to know if fractures are present is with a bone-density test. This is a simple, painless test similar to an X-ray, and it can tell you if your bones have become frailer.

With Parkinson's, exercises for which you bend and twist the upper

body are essential to loosening the muscles of the trunk and correcting posture. However, if you have been diagnosed with osteoporosis—and especially if you have compression

fractures—you need to eliminate or modify movements that round the shoulders forward or twist the back, as these can make your condition worsen.

It is best to consult your physician or physical therapist to determine which exercises are okay for you to do.

In most cases, postural change is muscular in nature and muscles can be stretched and strengthened at any age and fitness level.

Unfortunately, there is a common misconception that a forward-rounded posture is just something that happens with age. It is good to know that this is not true, and that with an appropriate and gentle strengthening and stretching routine, your posture will improve.

Weight-bearing exercise and improved walking

Because osteoporosis is a condition that causes the bones to lose strength, it is essential to counter this with weight-bearing exercises for both the upper and lower body. Weight-bearing exercises—those in which you load your bones with your own weight—include walking, dancing and doing push-ups.

If you are dealing with Parkinson's only, you can do any type of aerobic activity, including swimming and biking. But if you also have osteoporosis, these types of activities are not enough to strengthen your bones because when you are in the water or on a bike you

ASK LORI

Got a question about exercise, yoga or meditation? You can send it to Lori Newell at info@livingwellyogaandfitness.com or P.O. Box 1057, Montauk, NY 11954. Lori will try to answer one or two questions in each column.

are not loading your bones with weight.

If you also have osteoporosis, it's important to make sure you are participating in a range of activities to address both aerobic needs and bone strength.

With Parkinson's, there is a tendency to walk with a shuffling step and to hold the arms stiff while walking. When dealing with both Parkinson's and osteoporosis, make sure you walk at least two to three times per week. You will then be getting your weight-bearing exercise for the osteoporosis, and you can focus on improving your gait by picking your feet up as you step and by swinging your arms as you walk.

Always start slowly with any new exercise program and check with your health-care provider if any exercise makes your symptoms worse. Remember, exercise should always make you feel better—not worse!

Lori Newell is a certified personal trainer and yoga teacher, as well as author of "The Book of Exercise and Yoga for Those with Parkinson's Disease," available for \$23.95 from Living Well Yoga and Fitness: www.livingwellyogaandfitness.com. (Price includes shipping and handling.) The book can be ordered online or by sending a check or money order to P.O. Box 1057 / Montauk, NY 11954. Group discounts are available. Mention the Parkinson's Post when you order and 30 percent of the cost of the book will be donated to the Northwest Parkinson's Foundation.

Team participation ranks among life's 'blessings' for cyclist

When you read about Team Parkinson's, do you wonder why people participate? More than that, do you wonder why on earth someone would ride 200 miles to support the Parkinson's community?

We posed this very question to Tim Sestak of Mukilteo, WA, who joined Team Parkinson's in 2007. Tim (at left in the photo below) counts being part of the team and riding the 200-mile Group Health Seattle-to-Portland Bicycle Classic—the STP for short—as one of many “blessings” life has afforded him.

“I have few phobias or fears,” said Sestak, who lists among other blessings his service as a pilot in the U.S. Navy, camping and hiking with the Boy Scouts, skydiving and bike riding. “But one of them is the loss of the physical control that allows me to lead an active and exciting life.”

Sestak said he rides for Team Parkinson's to do his part “in the effort to ensure that, eventually, no one will have to endure the loss and adversity of Parkinson's disease.”

Tim's wife, Sue, and his brother, Mike, are also involved with Team Parkinson's—as a team volunteer and fellow rider, respectively.

Many Team Parkinson's members ride in the STP, which takes place annually in July, but anyone can join Team Parkinson's and raise funds to support the Northwest Parkinson's Foundation. The team boasts marathoners, swimmers, stationery bikers and walkers.

The first step is to sign up for Team Parkinson's on our website, www.nwpf.org. Athletes who raise \$150 or more receive a limited-edition Team Parkinson's 2008 cycling jersey. Raise \$300 or more and you will be eligible to win great prizes, including:

- a \$2,500 custom-fit bicycle;
- two round-trip tickets anywhere Alaska Airlines flies (\$1,740 value);
- three nights at a Lake Chelan cabin (\$800 value); and
- two Seattle Mariner's tickets (\$80 value).

For every \$300 raised, you get another chance to win the prizes. Finally, athletes who raise \$500 or more will be reimbursed their event registration fee (up to \$85). All these benefits make Team Parkinson's a great opportunity for you to get exercise and have fun, but also to make a difference in the lives of people touched by Parkinson's disease.

More information is available online at www.nwpf.org, or call us toll-free at 877.980.7500. If you don't want to become a team member yourself, you can sponsor the team as a whole or individual athletes at www.nwpf.org. Make a gift and show Team Parkinson's your support!



Pendleton links to telehealth

The Parkinson's Telehealth Program is airing its monthly educational session in Pendleton, OR, where a group meets from 2 to 4 p.m. the third Monday of the month to tune in from Pendleton Public Library Community Hall.

Sue Petersen (541.276.4569 or bikerchick49@hotmail.com) or Barbara Brandt (541.276.1074) may be reached for more information.

The June 16 session, “Water Therapy for Parkinson's,” will air in 20 sites throughout the Northwest.

The Parkinson's Telehealth Program is jointly provided by the Spokane Parkinson's Resource Center, the Northwest Parkinson's Foundation, and INHS/Northwest Telehealth.

To find out if there is a site in your own community: 877.980.7500 or www.nwpf.org/TeleHealthNet.aspx

Conference aimed at carer concerns

A conference for caregivers will take place from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on June 2 at the Tukwila Community Center in Tukwila, WA.

Challenges in Caregiving: Giving Care, Taking Care will teach caregivers how to cope with the emotions of caregiving, managing stress, legal and financial planning, preventing back injuries, behaviors and strategies in dealing with dementia, and much more. Dr. Patt Schwab will give the keynote presentation.

Space is limited and pre-registration, which costs \$25, is required.

To receive a conference brochure and registration materials, call the Aging and Disability Administration at 800.422.3263.

Groups bring top scientists to Parkinson's community

The Parkinson's Disease Foundation, in collaboration with four regional Parkinson's organizations, announces a series of educational symposia and webcasts titled *Parkinson's Science: Innovations and New Perspectives*.

The series will allow people with Parkinson's, their families, support groups and health-care professionals to hear scientific updates directly from national and local Parkinson's authorities—in person and via the web.

The traveling web series will bring Parkinson's experts to four U.S. cities to discuss the latest discoveries in Parkinson's science. PDF is launching this program in conjunction with the Parkinson Association of the Carolinas, the Northwest Parkinson's Foundation, the Michigan Parkinson Foundation and the Houston Area Parkinson Society.

Each half-day symposium will feature scientists and clinicians presenting their latest insights on research that has potential impact on current treatments and on quality of life for people with Parkinson's disease.

Webcast technology will enable those who cannot attend in person to view the programs on the web, live as well as after the event. For people who can join the live webcasts, the technology will provide the opportunity to submit questions to the researchers during their presentations.

Those who cannot join the webcast live can still view the symposia online. Archived sessions will be available online 24 hours a day for a year after each event.

The first installment of the web series took place May 9 from Charlotte, NC, in collaboration with the Parkinson Association of the Carolinas. The session, titled "What's in the PD Pipeline?" featured Katrina Gwinn-Hardy, M.D., of the National Institutes of Health; Mark A. Stacy, M.D., of Duke University; and Clive Svendsen, Ph.D., of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

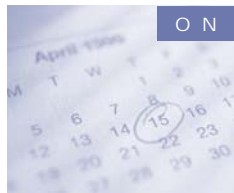
Future sessions will take place on the following dates:

- **July 18, 2008**, from Lansing, MI—offered jointly with the Michigan Parkinson Foundation
- **October 11, 2008**, from Spokane, WA—offered jointly with the Northwest Parkinson's Foundation
- **April 4, 2009**, from Houston, TX—offered jointly with the Houston Area Parkinson Society

For more information on the series, contact PDF at info@pdf.org or at 800.457.6676 or visit www.pdf.org/webcast. To learn more about how webcast technology can benefit you, your family or your support group, email webcast@pdf.org.

The series is made possible by a grant from UCB.

ON THE CALENDAR



Don't forget there's strength in numbers! Consider Parkinson's educational opportunities, support groups, and events in your area as ways to build your network. Go to www.nwpcf.org for a full listing of activities.

Introduction to yoga for Parkinson's patients

1 to 2 p.m. June 20 | Evergreen Healthcare, Kirkland, WA | Hear about the benefits of yoga for Parkinson's patients, and practice basic movements and breathing in your chair | \$5; registration required | Call 425.899.3000

Well-spouse support group

4 to 5:30 p.m. 1st Monday | Greenwood Senior Activity Center, 525 N 85th St., Seattle, WA (206.297.0875) | Group addresses the needs of the well spouse of a chronically ill partner; members care for loved ones with a variety of disabilities, including Parkinson's | Contact Carin Mack: 206.230.0166 or socialwkr@earthlink.net

Parkinson's support group

11:30 a.m. 3rd Friday | Tacoma Lutheran Retirement Community, 1301 N Highlands Parkway, Tacoma, WA | Contact Sharon Jung: 253.284.4488

Parkinson's support group

7 to 9 p.m. 2nd Wednesday | Pt. Fosdick fire station, Gig Harbor, WA | Contact Doug Manuel: 253.858.8741 or manuel@harbornet.com

Parkinson's support group

1 p.m. 2nd Tuesday | St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Lakewood, WA | Contact Doris Gilmore-Sherwood: 253.582.8421

Parkinson's support group

1:30 to 3 p.m. 3rd Wednesday | Merrill Gardens at Renton Centre, 104 Burnett Ave. S, Renton, WA | Contact Barbara Shull: als.rentoncentre@gmail.com

Parkinson's support group

1 p.m. 1st Friday | Oak Harbor Senior Center, 51 SE Jerome, Whidbey Island, WA | Contact Carolyn Hansen: 360.279.1785

Come 'unglued' with tactics to tackling freezing

Q: My feet get stuck when walking. Can this be treated?

A: *Freezing* is the term used to describe the temporary inability to move. It can affect your speech, walking, eyes and even the use of your hands in tasks such as writing.

Many people describe freezing as the feeling of having their feet glued to the floor. Freezing tends to occur when you begin to walk and when you turn or change directions.

Freezing can occur at any time or be linked to the dosing of your medicine. "Off" freezing tends to occur in the morning (after a prolonged period without medicine) or at the end of a medicine dose as its effects on movement wear off.

"Off" freezing can improve with medicine adjustment. "It may be helpful to keep your first dose of medicine at the bedside and take it before you get up if you freeze upon awakening," said Marilyn Borromeo-Wesner, a nurse practitioner at the Booth Gardner Parkinson's Care Center.

But, she added, check with your health-care provider before making any change in medication timing.

Freezing may not improve with medicine if it occurs during the medicine "on" state. In such cases, physical and occupational therapy are a very important part of treatment.

"There are different strategies to break freezing and get the person moving again," said Center physical therapist Ann Zylstra. "A simple change in your walking pattern or using sound and visual cues may help."

For instance, she said, marching, stepping sideways, shifting your weight, and stepping backwards or over a line or object can break the freeze.

Sound and music can stimulate



Ask the Expert is a regular column featuring questions from readers and responses from Parkinson's specialists. Got a question? Email it to questions@nwpf.org or mail it to 400 Mercer Street, Suite 401 / Seattle, WA 98109-4641—or just give us a call toll-free at 877.980.7500.

This month's question was posed to **Monique Giroux, M.D.**, pictured at left, medical director at the Booth Gardner Parkinson's Care Center in Kirkland, WA.

marching to help you reduce freezing. For some, simply singing and counting your steps can help.

Some walkers and canes have laser lines that shine on the floor, giving you a line to walk over.

Freezing tends to occur in certain places. Narrow, crowded spaces such as hallways, doorways, elevators, closets and bathrooms are common spots for freezing episodes. Stress, fatigue and anxiety can also worsen freezing.

Ann Hatley-Settles, occupational therapy assistant at the Center, offered

the following tips.

- Keep a diary of where you freeze and try and find ways to open up the space.

- Reduce clutter, simplify room furnishings, and eliminate loose rugs and boldly patterned carpet.

- Make sure your rooms have good lighting for ease in navigation.

Treatment for freezing is a team effort. Your physician and physical and occupational therapists can help you reduce freezing episodes and stay safe.

Bright ideas, helping hands

There are many ways to help us achieve our mission to improve quality of life in the Parkinson's community. People across the region—and beyond!—are getting creative in supporting our efforts. They're joining Team Parkinson's, starting bowling and golf tournaments, and hosting parties, concerts and recitals to benefit Northwest Parkinson's Foundation programs and services. **Want to help?** Call the Northwest Parkinson's

Foundation at 877.980.7500 to share your ideas.

point,” he said. When standing chest deep, water pressure pushes blood from the extremities into the chest, making circulation more efficient while decreasing blood pressure. “The body doesn’t need to use as much muscle force to sustain circulation,” he said.

Helen Weston, 73, who attends Murphy’s ai chi class, has high blood pressure but cannot take medication for it because of side effects—she has tried 22 different medications. Ai chi, she said, “helps bring that blood pressure down.”

Warm-water immersion also helps balance the autonomic nervous system, said Kasee Hildenbrand, Ph.D., who is studying the bio-physiological effects of warm-water immersion at WSU.

The autonomic nervous system comprises the sympathetic nervous system, which regulates how the body responds to stress, and the parasympathetic nervous system, which regulates the body at rest.

“You want to have an equal balance. You don’t want to be revved up or blah,” Hildenbrand said. “Warm water brings that difference closer to balance.”

In turn, Becker said, that balance helps the heart become more resistant to stress.

“The beauty of ai chi is that it can build strength, balance and coordination ... without loading up joints,” Becker said, adding that the joints only bear about 20 percent of body weight in the water, making ai chi a good exercise for people with joint injuries.

After three hip replacements, Dick Olson, 81, had weakened muscles and poor balance, but since starting Murphy’s class three years ago, he said both have improved.

His wife, Isola, 79, also credits ai chi for helping her recover from a knee replacement.

“I prefer the ai chi to anything because it combines all these move-

ments but under water, where there is a building of balance and no stress on your body,” she said. “Your body gets strong from the inside out.”

These benefits, along with potential flexibility improvements, prompted Karen Sesso, D.C., owner of North Central Chiropractic in Spokane, to take Murphy’s class in October to see if she should refer patients to it. “Something that looked like *t’ai chi* in water looked perfect for my patients,” said Sesso, who has already referred 10 patients and attends classes whenever she can, enjoying the decrease in swelling and pain from an old knee injury.

“I’ve gone to a pain-free knee for the first time in several years,” she said.

For Weston, who had leg stiffness since breaking one in the early ’90s, the basic ai chi stance was a challenge at first, but her flexibility improved so much it is now automatic.

In all, the potential physical benefits are applicable for a host of ailments, from fibromyalgia and arthritis to Parkinson’s disease and hypertension.

“[Ai chi] is a little slice of heaven,” Murphy said.

For most ai chi participants, the biggest benefit is relaxation. “It is soothing, relaxing, meditative,” Sesso said. “I haven’t missed a session that I could go to. Your body floats and your mind floats and you come out of there very peaceful.”

That relaxation leads to good sleep and increased energy, the Olsons said.

“It relaxes you, which is an important part of having energy,” Isola Olson said, noting that the days she feels tired and sluggish, she leaves class feeling energized.

“Even the following day, you feel so much better. It changes your attitude and well being,” added Dick Olson, who practices deep breathing if he has trouble sleeping. “It will take care of your insomnia.”

By remembering the warm water, the slowed breath, and the relaxation,

Murphy said, “You can take yourself back with remembered wellness.”

Jill Barville is a freelance writer and technical writing consultant who lives in Spokane Valley, WA. This article originally appeared in the February 2008 issue of Prime magazine. It is reprinted with the author’s permission.

Editor’s note: To find out if there’s an ai chi class in your area, go to www.ruthsova.com/aichi.htm for a national listing of certified ai chi practitioners.

Hold the date for 2008 HOPE

Mark your calendar for the **2008 HOPE for Parkinson’s Conference**, set for Nov. 1 at the Hilton Seattle Airport & Conference Center.

Registration materials will be available after July 1.

For questions about the conference, call the Northwest Parkinson’s Foundation toll-free at 877.980.7500, or email us at info@nwpf.org.

Programs provide a chance to learn

The Washington Chapter American Parkinson Disease Association offers the following educational programs for patients.

- **June 24**—11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Pacific Grill, 1502 Pacific Ave., Tacoma, WA; featuring Patrick Hogan, D.O., and Laurie Mischley, N.D.

- **July 9**—11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Alaska Medical Center, 3200 Providence Drive, Anchorage, AK; featuring Larry Elmer, M.D., Ph.D., Cleveland Clinic, Ohio Providence.

Lunch will be provided.

For more information, contact Evie Davis at 425.443.8269 or evedavis@gmail.com.



Gifts to the Northwest Parkinson's Foundation support educational programs including our website, email updates, caregiver booklet, newsletter, patient-education programs, and conference.

Donations also fuel outreach and advocacy efforts on behalf of patients and families.

We are privileged so many in the Northwest Parkinson's Foundation family support our mission by giving generously throughout the year in honor or memory of special friends and loved ones.

Thank you, all, for your support.

Listed here are tribute gifts made between **February 25 and April 28, 2008.**

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Avoid the hassle of car lots, expensive ads and price haggling and get a charitable gift tax deduction instead!

Through our vehicle donation program, you can donate your car, truck, van, SUV, RV, motorcycle or boat to the Northwest Parkinson's Foundation through the Northwest Charity Donation Service, which sells vehicles and sends us the proceeds.

Most vehicles are accepted, although some restrictions apply. Northwest Charity Donation Service will determine if your vehicle qualifies for donation.

Making a charitable contribution through our vehicle donation program is an easy way to help us fulfill our mission to improve quality of life in the Parkinson's community.

Ready to help? Call Northwest Charity Donation Service at 800.961.6119 or visit www.nwcds.com and say that you want the proceeds from your vehicle sale to go to the Northwest Parkinson's Foundation.

Northwest Charity Donation Service will determine the market value of your car, pick it up free of charge, complete all title transfers, and provide you with a tax receipt.



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The Northwest Parkinson's Foundation is a cofounder and partner of the **Booth Gardner Parkinson's Care Center** (13030 121st Way NE, Kirkland, WA 98034). This comprehensive care facility is home to physicians, neuropsychologists, physical and occupational therapists, and speech pathologists, all specialists in working with Parkinson's patients. To make an appointment, call **425.899.3123**.

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Want to increase your vocal strength? Just sing, sing a song!

If you want vocal exercises you'll look forward to repeating, says reader Barbara McDermott of Charlotte, NC, try singing along with Eva Cassidy on her CD, *Songbird*—specifically the songs, “Oh, Had I a Golden Thread” and “Over the Rainbow.”

“Eva belts out these songs, making quite a voice workout,” McDermott says. “Singing along with her reminded me somewhat of the Lee Silverman Voice Therapy program.

“Plus, the lyrics lift your spirits. These particular song arrangements seem to be helping me.”

Thanks for the tip, Barbara! Got a tip to share with readers? Email it to info@nwpcf.org, mail it to us at 400 Mercer Street, Suite 401 / Seattle, WA 98109-4641, or give us a call toll-free at 877.980.7500.