



Tips for Managing Tremor in Daily Life

Practical Strategies to Support Function, Confidence, and Independence

Tremor is one of the most visible symptoms of Parkinson's disease—and often one of the most emotionally challenging. It can affect handwriting, eating, dressing, using technology, and confidence in public settings. Tremor may fluctuate throughout the day and often worsens with stress, fatigue, or medication “off” periods.

While tremor may not disappear entirely, **there are many effective ways to manage its impact on daily life**. The goal is not perfection—it is function, comfort, and self-confidence.

Through the **Wisconsin Parkinson Association**, individuals with Parkinson's are encouraged to use practical tools and strategies that make everyday tasks more manageable.

Tremor does not define your ability.

Strategy—not force—creates control.

Understanding Tremor in Parkinson's

Parkinson's tremor is caused by changes in brain signaling, not weakness or anxiety—though stress can worsen it.

Important features include:

- Often present at rest
- May improve with purposeful movement
- Can fluctuate with medication timing
- Often worsens with stress, fatigue, or rushing

Tremor severity does not necessarily reflect disease severity.

General Strategies That Help Reduce Tremor Impact

Reduce Stress & Rushing

Stress amplifies tremor.

Helpful approaches:

- Build extra time into routines
- Pause before starting tasks
- Practice slow breathing when tremor increases

Calm reduces tremor more reliably than effort.

Plan Around Medication “On” Time

Tremor often improves when medication is working well.

Helpful steps:

- Notice when tremor is least intrusive
- Schedule fine-motor tasks during stronger “on” periods
- Share tremor patterns with your care team

Medication adjustments may help in some cases.

Practical Tips for Common Daily Tasks

Eating & Drinking

- Use weighted utensils
 - Choose cups with lids or straws
 - Rest elbows on the table for added stability
 - Use bowls instead of plates when helpful
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Dressing & Personal Care

- Choose clothing with Velcro, magnets, or elastic waistbands

- Sit while dressing to reduce effort
 - Use electric toothbrushes or razors
 - Stabilize the arm against the body when grooming
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Writing & Technology

- Use larger pens or weighted pens
- Print instead of cursive
- Use voice-to-text for phones or computers
- Increase screen sensitivity or font size

Adapting the task protects independence—it does not reduce it.

Using the Body to Improve Control

Helpful positioning strategies include:

- Resting the forearm or elbow on a surface
- Holding objects close to the body
- Using two hands for tasks when possible
- Stabilizing one hand with the other

These strategies reduce the space in which tremor occurs.

Assistive Devices & Tools

Adaptive equipment can significantly reduce frustration.

Examples include:

- Weighted utensils and pens
- Plate guards and non-slip mats
- Button hooks and zipper pulls
- Tremor-reducing cups

- Smart devices with voice control

Using tools is a strength—it preserves independence.

Occupational therapists can help identify the best options.

Exercise & Tremor

Regular movement supports overall motor control.

Helpful activities include:

- Strength training
- Stretching
- Parkinson’s-specific exercise programs
- Relaxation-based movement (yoga, tai chi)

Exercise does not always reduce tremor immediately, but it improves long-term function and resilience.

Emotional Impact of Tremor

Because tremor is visible, it can affect:

- Confidence
- Willingness to eat or write in public
- Social engagement

Feeling frustrated or embarrassed is understandable. Support, education, and adaptation help restore confidence.

When to Talk With Your Care Team

Contact your provider if:

- Tremor worsens significantly
- Tremor interferes with eating, safety, or work
- Tremor no longer responds to medication

- Stress or anxiety related to tremor increases

There may be medication, therapy, or advanced treatment options to consider.

Living Well with Tremor

Many people with Parkinson's live full, active lives with tremor by adapting how tasks are done—not by avoiding them.

Tremor may change how you do things.

It does not take away what you can do.

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