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American Parkinson Disease Association Launches Parkinson's Training for Fitness, Health and Wellness Professionals

Free online training program designed to teach fitness professionals how to best meet the unique needs of people with Parkinson's disease

NEW YORK, NY – September 24, 2018 – The [American Parkinson Disease Association](#) (APDA) launches today a brand new, highly-specialized training program for fitness, health and wellness professionals to help make exercise more available and approachable for people living with Parkinson's disease (PD). The [APDA Parkinson's Disease Training for Fitness Professionals](#) is a free online training program that has been carefully developed by a select panel of experts to help fitness professionals safely and effectively work with people with PD to develop exercise regimens that will support treatment of their symptoms and substantially improve their quality of life.

The importance of exercise and physical activity for people diagnosed with Parkinson's disease (PD) has been well-documented. Exercise produces many benefits including increased physical functioning (motor performance, strength, flexibility), improved gait and balance, cardiovascular fitness, and overall better quality of life. As such, great strides are being made to make exercise a part of the standard treatment of PD.

"As the evidence about the positive impact of exercise on people with PD started growing, we identified a gap of educational resources and easily-accessible guidance for the fitness community" states Leslie A. Chambers, President & CEO, APDA. "In order to have the biggest reach and impact the most people, we knew whatever we created had to be user-friendly and evidence-based."

To develop the [APDA Parkinson's Disease Training for Fitness Professionals](#), APDA convened a panel of PD and exercise experts that included neurologists, movement disorder specialists, and physical therapists, under the leadership of Terry Ellis, PT, PhD, NCS, Boston University, and Lee Dibble, PT, PhD, ATC, University of Utah, to develop a gold standard of exercise recommendations specifically for people with PD. Dr. Tami DeAngelis from Boston University, Sargent College of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences and Dr. Merrill Landers, Chair of the Department of Physical Therapy, University of Las Vegas are the primary authors of the program.

"People with PD who exercise do better over the long term compared to those who don't" states Terry Ellis, PT, PhD, NCS and co-chair of the training program. "So of course, we want to get as many people exercising as possible, but we want to make sure they are doing it safely, and doing the types of exercises that are going to be most effective for their symptoms and specific situations. This online program will enable us to get this critical information in the hands of so many people, who like us, are trying hard to help people with PD live their best, healthiest life."

Whether newly diagnosed, or living with the disease for years, exercise is one of the most effective ways for individuals to combat the symptoms of PD. However, it is important for the fitness community to take into account a unique set of considerations to ensure that people with PD get the exercise they need in a manner that is specifically tailored to their particular symptoms and situations. With the growing number of community exercise classes specifically designed for the PD community, the [APDA Parkinson's Disease Training for Fitness Professionals](#) online program will help to ensure that participants are safe and supported. The program will also teach fitness professionals about the signs and symptoms of PD and the important ways in which exercise can improve those symptoms, as well as how to describe common PD symptoms and clearly explain the benefits of exercise to those with PD.

APDA has partnered with the Office of Continuing Professional Education (OCPE), a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, to create this user-friendly program. (APDA and Rutgers OCPE previously partnered on an online course for First Responders).

The [APDA Parkinson's Disease Training for Fitness Professionals](#) is a 1-2 hour course with instructional videos. All of those who complete the training course will receive a certificate of completion. Visit www.apdaparkinson.org/pd-fitness-training to access this free course.

The [APDA Parkinson's Disease Training for Fitness Professionals](#) program was developed with the invaluable expertise and guidance of a prestigious panel of experts including:

Terry Ellis, PT, PhD, NCS: Co-Chair
Boston University

Jeff Hoder, PT, DPT, NCS
Duke University

Lee Dibble, PT, PhD, ATC: Co-Chair
The University of Utah

Laurie A. King, PhD, PT
Oregon Health & Science University

Cristina Colon-Semenza, PT, MPT, NCS
University of Connecticut

Merrill Landers, PT, PhD
University of Nevada

Tami DeAngelis, PT, DPT, GCS
Boston University

Marie Saint-Hilaire, MD, FRCPC
Boston University Medical Center

Heather Cianci, PT, MS, GCS
Dan Aaron Parkinson's Rehab Center

Margaret Schenkman, PT, PhD, FAPTA
University of Colorado

Gammon Earhart, PT, PhD
Washington University St. Louis

Lisa Shulman, MD
University of Maryland

Chris Hass, MS, PhD
University of Florida

Cathi Thomas, RN, MS, CNRN
Boston University Medical Center

The American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA) is the largest grassroots network dedicated to fighting Parkinson's disease (PD) and works tirelessly to assist the more than 1 million Americans with PD live life to the fullest in the face of this chronic, neurological disorder. Founded in 1961, APDA has raised and invested more than \$177 million to provide outstanding patient services and educational programs, elevate public awareness about the disease, and support research designed to unlock the mysteries of PD and ultimately put an end to this disease. To join us in the fight against Parkinson's disease and to learn more about the support APDA provides nationally through our network of Chapters and Information & Referral (I&R) Centers, as well as our national Research Program and Centers for Advanced Research, please visit us at www.apdaparkinson.org.