



PEDALING FOR PARKINSON'S™

Rider Guide //// 



DAVIS PHINNEY

Foundation for Parkinson's

Inform. Connect. Inspire.





ABOUT PEDALING FOR PARKINSON'S ///

For more than ten years, Pedaling for Parkinson's (PFP) classes have helped thousands of people with Parkinson's get moving, find community, and feel better. We're so happy you've found this resource. This guide will help you consider whether this program is right for you, find a class to attend, and know what to expect at your first class.

In 2023, the founder of Pedaling for Parkinson's, Dr. Jay Alberts, chose the Davis Phinney Foundation to become the stewards of this innovative and effective program. With Davis's roots in cycling and the Foundation's history as an advocate for exercise, this was a natural next step to ensure the sustainability and broad availability of this program for people living with Parkinson's across the country.

ABOUT THE DAVIS PHINNEY FOUNDATION ///

Since 2004, the Davis Phinney Foundation has brought to life essential programs, research, content, and events for those affected by Parkinson's, including people living with Parkinson's and those who love them, physicians, allied health professionals, and others. In addition to PFP, programs of the Foundation include:

- » [Every Victory Counts® manual and Every Victory Counts® Care Partner manual](#)
- » [Ambassador Leadership Program](#)
- » [Parkinson's webinars and meetups](#)
- » [The Parkinson's Podcast](#)

These programs impact hundreds of thousands of people living with Parkinson's and their families each year. Learn more about the Foundation at dpmf.org.



PFP RIDER INFORMATION ///

THE PROGRAM

The Pedaling for Parkinson's™ program is informed by research demonstrating that consistent, high-cadence cycling can help reduce symptoms of Parkinson's. To maximize the benefits of the program, riders and instructors are encouraged to follow these guidelines:

- » Frequency: 3 times per week
- » Time: 30+ minutes each session
- » Cadence: 75+ rpms (or “uncomfortably fast” if you cannot achieve 75rpms). The cadence can be achieved during steady state riding or during interval training.

Classes are adaptable to various ability levels and stages of Parkinson's. Instructors are supported in creating class plans that meet the unique needs of their rider community. Participants who ride three days a week over eight weeks have shown improvement in their Parkinson's-related symptoms by as much as 35%.

For convenience, most programs are offered on indoor, stationary bikes and hosted at local YMCAs, gyms, or other community spaces. Classes usually meet on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays or on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. A typical Pedaling for Parkinson's class includes an instructor and as many participants as bikes are available at each facility. Class sizes range anywhere from three to 30 participants.

THE RESEARCH

Dr. Jay Alberts and his colleagues have dedicated 17 years to studying the effects of exercise, primarily high-cadence, high-intensity aerobic cycling (sometimes referred to in research as forced exercise), on motor performance and function in people living with Parkinson's. Each project has inspired the next, and the research continually supports anecdotal evidence that forced and high-intensity aerobic exercise improves motor function (and more) in people with Parkinson's. Learn more about the timeline of this research on the Davis Phinney Foundation website at dpf.org/PFPresearch.

FINDING A CLASS

PFP classes are available in YMCAs, community centers, and gyms across the country. To see if there is an in-person class near you, search your zip code on our “Join a Class” page [here](#). If you cannot find a class near you, you may wish to join one of our [PFP Online classes](#). Or, consider becoming a local advocate to [bring a class to your area](#)!

JOINING A CLASS

Registration is required for all in-person and online classes.

For **in-person classes**, registration is managed directly by the class facility. You can find contact information for each class by searching your zip code on our [Join a Class map](#). Once you’ve found a class near you, please reach out to the facility directly to ask about availability and how to register. Most facilities will require you to complete a waiver or other paperwork before participating.

If you need help finding contact information or navigating the registration process, please don’t hesitate to reach out to us at pedalingforparkinsons@dpf.org. We’re happy to assist you.

For **online classes**, you can find the current schedule on our website at dpf.org/PFPonline. To join an online class, simply complete the online registration form, and you’ll receive the links and instructions you need to participate.

For more information about what you’ll need for online classes, see the requirements on page 5.

PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS

Pedaling for Parkinson’s may not be suitable for every person with Parkinson’s. You should consult your doctor or others on your medical care team before starting any new exercise program.

When planning to attend your first class, you may want to see if your instructor is available 10-15 minutes before class to answer questions and ensure you are able to participate safely.

Your instructor should ensure you can safely get on and off a stationary bike. You will also need to be able to secure your feet in or on the pedals and maintain a safe and suitable body position to stay on the bike throughout the duration of the class.

Participants should come to class with the following:

- » Comfortable exercise clothing (padded cycling shorts are optional)
- » Closed-toed exercise shoes with a firm sole such as tennis shoes, joggers, or trainers (Cycling-specific shoes are optional but not required)
- » Water bottle
- » Heart-rate monitor (not required but may be helpful)
- » Portable seat pads, gloves, ear plugs, towel, or other equipment if desired for added comfort
- » Any medications needed before, during, or after class

Online Classes

In addition to the above, participation in online classes require an internet enabled device (smart phone, iPad, tablet, laptop, etc.) and access to an indoor, stationary bike, such as one of the following:



Bicycle trainer stand that uses your existing bike's gearing and/or wheel.



Indoor exercise bike (standup or recumbent) with a computer or display to show you resistance/speed/cadence.



Indoor stationary studio bike typical of a bike you'd find for class use at gyms.

WHAT BEGINNERS SHOULD KNOW

We often hear from people who are considering joining a Pedaling for Parkinson's class that they are intimidated or worried that they might not be able to keep up. But what we also hear from people is that, once they tried the class, they were pleasantly surprised to discover a supportive community and a helpful instructor that welcomed them and helped them build the confidence and stamina needed to fully participate over time.

It is not uncommon for people new to the class to need some time to build up to participating fully in the class. That's okay and your instructor can and should help you adapt the class (when you're starting out and throughout your lifetime as a participant) to meet your ability level. New riders may find success with integrating more intervals (alternating pedaling "uncomfortably fast" for a few minutes and then slowing down to catch your breath) or even participating in a shortened version of the class for a while.

Remember, research has shown that in addition to cadence (how fast you pedal) the most important factor in maximizing benefits of the program is consistency. This means, showing up consistently and frequently is more important than going as fast as the person next to you. Research also has shown the importance of community and connection for people living with Parkinson's. This means that overcoming your worries about joining a class will have benefits simply because you showed up and participated as a member of the group.

Beginners can do this!

WHAT'S NEXT? ///

We hope this guide answered your questions and will help you get started attending a PFP class soon. Have other questions before you start or want to speak with one of our staff members? Contact us at pedalingforparkinsons@dpf.org or by calling 1-866-358-0285.

