



# Parkinson Association of Orange County

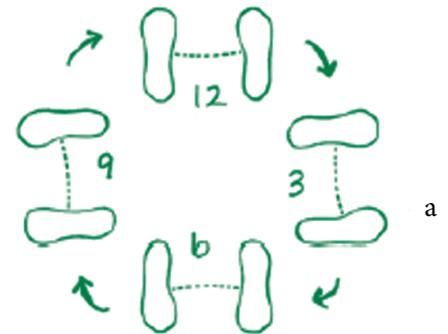
## Steps to Help Avoid Falls

There are some important tips and techniques you can use to help prevent falls. When you have PD, you must now **think** about many things your body used to perform automatically. By thinking about what you are doing, you are using a different part of your brain than the part affected by PD.

- Try not to move too quickly; think about what you are doing.
- When walking, tell yourself to land with the heel striking down first.
- DO NOT pivot your body over your feet when turning. Instead try making a “U-turn” while walking.
- If you are standing in place and must turn, make sure the feet and the body move together, OR move the foot on the side you are turning toward with a march step and then step around with the other foot and body together.
- Never lean your center of gravity, which is near the belly-button area, too far forward over your feet. If you must reach forward, widen your stance and place one foot ahead of the other. Then stand directly in front of what you are reaching for. Finally place one hand on the counter, wall or other stable object while you reach with your other hand.
- The moment you begin to shuffle or freeze, try to come to a complete stop. Take a breath and start again, focusing on that first step or your heel strike.
- Do not carry many things while you are walking. It has been shown that people with PD have difficulty performing more than one task at time.
- Avoid walking backwards. Instead try stepping sideways, taking large marching steps to turn, and then walking forward.
- When returning to sit, turn all of the way around and make sure that both legs are touching the chair. Reach back with both arms to slowly lower yourself. NEVER reach forward for the chair first and then turn to sit. This can lead to landing sideways on the end of the chair, landing too hard in the chair, or missing the chair and falling to the floor.

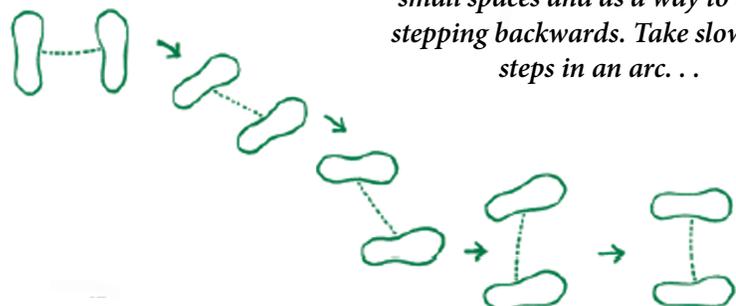


*“U-turn” This maneuver is useful for more open areas. Move your feet and body together in an arc. . .*



*“Clock-turn” Technique: Useful in small areas and for when you are stopped and must turn. Start at 12 o'clock and take two slow steps to 3 o'clock, and so on. . .*

This article is taken from a booklet called *Parkinson's Disease: Fitness Counts* by Heather Cianci, PT, MS, GCS. The booklet contains lots of useful information on fitness. A free copy can be obtained from the National Parkinson Foundation. This booklet is available to read on the National Parkinson Foundation website at the following URL: [http://www3.parkinson.org/site/DocServer/Fitness\\_Counts.pdf?docID=188&JSe rvSessionIdr004=owczd4zm32.app340a](http://www3.parkinson.org/site/DocServer/Fitness_Counts.pdf?docID=188&JSe rvSessionIdr004=owczd4zm32.app340a)



*“Side-step Arc” Technique: Useful in small spaces and as a way to avoid stepping backwards. Take slow side-steps in an arc. . .*