



# The Punch Line

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## Why We Exercise

Parkinson's disease is a progressive neurological disorder that affects movement, causing symptoms such as tremors, stiffness, and balance problems. While there is no cure for Parkinson's disease, various treatments can help manage symptoms and improve quality of life. Among these treatments, exercise has emerged as a *crucial* component in the management of Parkinson's disease. What are the benefits?

**Improved Motor Function:** Regular physical activity can help improve motor symptoms in individuals with Parkinson's disease. Exercise enhances muscle strength, flexibility, and balance, which are often compromised in Parkinson's patients. Activities such as walking, swimming, and resistance training can help maintain and even improve mobility.

**Neuroprotection:** Exercise has been shown to have neuro-protective effects, potentially slowing the progression of Parkinson's disease. Physical activity increases the release of neurotrophic factors, which support the survival and growth of neurons. This can help protect the brain cells that are typically affected by Parkinson's disease.

**Enhanced Mood and Mental Health:** Parkinson's disease can lead to depression and anxiety. Exercise is known to boost mood and reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety by increasing the production of endorphins, the body's natural mood elevators. Engaging in regular physical activity can improve overall mental well-being and quality of life.

**Cognitive Benefits:** Cognitive decline is a common issue in Parkinson's disease. Exercise has been found to improve cognitive function, including memory and executive function. Activities that combine physical and mental challenges, such as dance or tai chi, can be particularly beneficial.

**Social Interaction:** Participating in group exercise classes or sports can provide social interaction, which is important for mental health. Social engagement can reduce feelings of isolation and improve overall well-being.

### *The Punch Line*

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# Types of Exercise Recommended

**Aerobic Activity:** Activities such as walking, cycling and swimming can improve cardiovascular health and overall fitness. Aerobic exercise can increase stamina and reduce fatigue.

**Strength Training:** Resistance exercises, such as weightlifting or using resistance bands, can help build muscle strength and improve posture. Stronger muscles can better support the body and improve balance.

**Flexibility Exercises:** Stretching exercises and yoga can enhance flexibility and reduce muscle stiffness. Improved flexibility can make daily activities easier and reduce the risk of injury.

**Balance and Coordination Exercises:** Activities like tai chi, dance, and of course *BOXING* can improve balance and coordination, reducing the risk of falls. These exercise activities also provide a mental challenge, which can benefit cognitive function.

**Conclusion:** Exercise is a vital component in the management of Parkinson's disease. It offers numerous benefits, including improved motor function, neuroprotection, enhanced mood, cognitive benefits, and social interaction. By incorporating various types of exercise into their routine, individuals with Parkinson's disease can improve their quality of life and potentially slow the progression of the disease. As always, it is important for individuals to consult with their healthcare provider before starting any new exercise program to ensure it is safe and appropriate for their specific condition. The Rock Steady Boxing program incorporates each of these exercise types – with the important group dynamic that is so important – and under the direction and supervision of certified instructors. Our program is one of only three exercise programs accredited by the Parkinson's Foundation.

## Rock Steady Boxing of Michiana

50770-A State Road 933  
South Bend  
and  
2510 Benham Avenue  
Elkhart

(574) 286-6731

[RockSteadyBoxingMichiana.com](http://RockSteadyBoxingMichiana.com)



## Family Picnic



Join us on Sunday, **September 8** at noon  
Mishawaka's Central Park - Large Pavilion

**Burgers and hot dogs provided**

**Bring a dish to share, your drinks and table service.**

**Sign up at the gym for our head count.**

# Member Spotlight



## Beth Witmer

Born in Greenville, Ohio, sixty-four-year-old Beth Witmer was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease at age 50.

In November 2017, Beth joined a Rock Steady Boxing program in North Manchester, Indiana. Attending a support group at Goshen's Greencroft Center, she heard about our Rock Steady Boxing group here in Michiana. In May of 2018, Beth became one of our first female members, joining us at our Osceola location.

Beth is an Elkhart County homemaker and dairy farmer. She and husband Tim have five grown children. Two of their sons are involved in the family farm, allowing Beth and Tim to travel to Wisconsin to visit their three grandkids.

Beth's primary Parkinson's symptoms are tremors and freezing. Is Beth a hitter? Are you kidding? It's a real treat to witness Beth punish the speed bag. She admits that early on, the speed bag was a challenge. But now she enjoys hitting the bag to the beat of the music in the gym.

When talking with Beth, it doesn't take long to recognize that she is an enthusiastic advocate of exercise – especially for folks with PD. She believes that *any* exercise is good, and although we can all exercise alone at home (she has a gym in her basement), she says there's nothing like group exercise for accountability and camaraderie.

Many of our members don't know anyone else with Parkinson's - outside our local RSB group. It's interesting that Beth has two friends in LaFayette, Indiana, two more in Pennsylvania and one in Michigan *all* with Parkinson's disease and ALL in a Rock Steady Boxing program! Once when comparing notes with her Michigan friend, Beth was amused when he asked, "Do you folks have that Cheesy Cheer?"

Beth is quick to express her appreciation for the RSB coaches and volunteers for their help, their positive attitudes and generosity. She admires their passion and uses every opportunity to thank our volunteers. Oh, and she's sure to welcome and encourage visitors to the gym.

What does she like most about the RSB program? The Rock Steady family, of course – and the fact that multiple coaches make for fresh, interesting and creative sessions. **Beth fights back against Parkinson's!**

## Welcome New Members

### South Bend

Laura Angelucci

Steven Clark

Jim Cripe

Bruce Fitzpatrick

Jim Lonsfoote

Kevin (Kip) O'Neil

Bill Wonisch

### Elkhart

Steve Carlson

Keith Russell

## We Remember...

Elizabeth Ebole

July 13, 1936 -

May 17, 2024