

"What else can I do besides taking my medication?"

Alexander Technique for Parkinson's

In partnership with your medical care team
AT can play a role in management of symptoms

an initiative of **the Poise Project**

Alexander Technique & Parkinson's disease

Alexander technique (AT) is a novel cognitive embodiment approach that can be delivered in a variety of settings. Using an integrated psychomotor approach, AT specialists teach ways of thinking that combine interoception, exteroception, proprioception, and goal awareness in ways that enhance performance of daily activities while improving confidence and reducing anxiety. Adaptive Alexander-based programs support patients' abilities to be active, skilled, and engaged partners in their own preventive and rehabilitative care, increasing overall motor and emotional self-management.

Through individual lessons or group classes, people living with Parkinson's disease (PWP) can learn to:

- Better manage motor and non-motor symptoms during everyday activities.
- Choose functional patterns that promote better postural tone, reduce back, neck, and joint pain, and improve balance and gait.
- Apply these skills consciously during PT, OT or SLP sessions or exercise programs.
- Apply these skills independently, even if unable to engage in physical exercise.
- Become more active and skilled partners in their own overall care.

A laboratory study showed that a single exposure to AT principles led to immediate motor improvement in PWP.¹ Some time is needed, however, for new ways of thinking to become easily accessible for the patient in daily life. For long-lasting benefit, a series of private sessions or group classes is recommended. A randomized clinical trial of AT for PWP found motor and cognitive benefits following 24 weekly individual sessions relative to an active control group with retention of benefits after six months.² Other studies have found benefits of AT for older adults with balance problems³, and patients with arthritic knees had benefit retention at 15 months.⁴

We are working to bring affordable AT-based services for people living with Parkinson's and their care partners. Combining individual sessions with group classes may be a cost-effective approach. With funding from the Parkinson's Foundation, we have developed group courses for PWP and their care partners learning together. Participants report improvements in their ability to manage motor and non-motor symptoms including balance, gait, posture, freezing, rigidity, tremor, pain, vocal volume, anxiety, and apathy, with retention of benefits at 6 months.⁵ With additional funding from the Parkinson's Foundation and the Alzheimer's Foundation of America, we developed a second course specifically for care partners to teach skills to help them manage the physical and emotional demands of caregiving. Care partner participants report that the course has helped them recover some independence, wellbeing, and agency in the face of the many challenges Parkinson's brings into their lives, with retention of benefits at 12 months.⁶ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, both courses were also delivered online, again with positive results and with retention of benefits.⁷

www.ThePoiseProject.org

¹ Cohen 2015 NNR. ² Stallibrass 2002; Stallibrass 2005. ³ Batson 2008; Dennis 1999; Glover 2018. ⁴ Preece 2016. ⁵ Gross 2019 & 2020 Movement Disorders, Clinical Practice; Gross 2019 ACRM Archives; Gross 2020 ACRM Archives. ⁶ Gross 2019 Movement Disorders; Gross 2020 ACRM Archives; Gross 2020 Movement Disorders Clinical Practice. ⁷ Gross 2020 ACRM Archives; Gross 2022 MDS Movement Disorders; Gross 2022 ACRM Archives; Gross 2022 AAIC Papers; Gross 2022 MDS Movement Disorders.

Alexander technique (AT) can be a valuable training intervention for managing living with Parkinson's.

Online, onsite, or in studio private sessions, workshops & group courses.



Educational presentations for medical & allied health professionals.



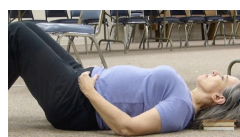
For information about The Poise Project and AT for people living with Parkinson's and their care partners,
or to locate AT specialists who have training in working with this population or who can offer online sessions:

Please contact:
Monika Gross, +1 828-254-3102
Executive Director, The Poise Project
www.ThePoiseProject.org
info@thepoiseproject.org



Informational videos and interviews with course participants: <https://www.vimeo.com/thepoiseproject>

Parkinson's Europe Alexander technique guidelines: <https://bit.ly/parkinsonseurope>



To find additional AT specialists in the United States or anywhere in the world, please visit:

American Society for the Alexander Technique
American Center for the Alexander Technique
Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique
Alexander Technique International
STAT Internationally Affiliated Societies
Alexander Alliance
Interactive Teaching Method
Professional Association of Alexander Teachers

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