



HELPING PEOPLE AFFECTED  
BY PARKINSON'S

# ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE

## COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS AND THERAPIES

### INFORMATION FOR INDIVIDUALS, PARTNERS AND FAMILIES

[WWW.PARKINSONSCARE.ORG.UK](http://WWW.PARKINSONSCARE.ORG.UK)

A Charity registered in England and Wales 1179246 and in Scotland SC048881

the  $\mathbb{R}^n$  is the  $n$ -dimensional Lebesgue measure.

Let  $\mathcal{A}$  be a  $\sigma$ -algebra of subsets of  $\mathbb{R}^n$ . A  $\mu$ -measurable function  $f: \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  is called  $\mu$ -integrable if

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} |f| d\mu < \infty.$$

Let  $f, g: \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  be  $\mu$ -measurable functions. Then

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} (f + g) d\mu = \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\mu + \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} g d\mu$$

and

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} cf d\mu = c \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\mu$$

for any constant  $c \in \mathbb{R}$ . If  $f, g: \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  are  $\mu$ -integrable functions, then

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} (fg) d\mu = \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\mu \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} g d\mu$$

if and only if  $f$  and  $g$  are independent.

Let  $f: \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  be a  $\mu$ -measurable function. Then

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\mu = \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f^+ d\mu - \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f^- d\mu$$

where  $f^+ = \max\{f, 0\}$  and  $f^- = \max\{-f, 0\}$ .

Let  $f: \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$  be a  $\mu$ -measurable function. Then

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\mu = \int_{\mathbb{R}^n} f d\mu$$

if and only if  $f$  is  $\mu$ -integrable.

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## Welcome Parkinson's Care.

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# Parkinson's Care and Support UK

Parkinson's Care and Support UK are the only UK charity which focuses solely on natural treatments and alternative therapies for Parkinson's Disease. We have a holistic approach, which looks at the root cause of disease and not just at hiding symptoms.

As well as funding non-pharmaceutical research, Parkinson's Care and Support UK provides free online and face to face exercise classes throughout the UK, free home-based neurological physiotherapy, free respite care, information and support on diet and nutrition and free social and wellness activities and events. We are currently developing a new CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) Helpline for people with Parkinson's who suffer from anxiety and depression. This Helpline will be extended to partners and family carers.

Parkinson's Care and Support UK have put together this leaflet on Anxiety and Depression in Parkinson's to give people a better understanding of the non-pharmaceutical treatments and therapies that are being widely used today and how these may help with your condition.

As a charity, we do not promote the use of pharmaceutical medications for anxiety and depression. Prescribed medications can have severe side effects and can lead to dependency.

We offer insight to an alternative approach for tackling anxiety and depression through the use of non-pharmaceutical treatments, supplements, herbal medicines and therapies. We do not believe in simply treating symptoms. Instead we favour a holistic approach which looks at the root cause of the illness whilst trying to restore balance and harmony between the mind and body.

We do not endorse or recommend one specific treatment over another and encourage this to be a starting point in which you can research further in order to make an informed decision about how you treat anxiety or depression. Everyone is different and so it is important to be willing to try different things to see what works best for you. Also remember, your diet, lifestyle and environment can cause or contribute to anxiety and depression. Eat a well -balanced diet and surround yourself with positive people which will help you to heal quicker.

If you are taking medication, we recommend that you discuss any new treatment or therapy with your GP to ensure that they do not have an effect on them. Some treatments and therapies work well with some medications and some do not, so please seek medical advice from a professional first.

## Mental Health and Parkinson's

Up to half of all people with Parkinson's may suffer from depression and/or anxiety at some point during the course of their illness, which if not treated can cause significant loss of life quality. In fact, research has found that taken together, mood, depression and anxiety have the greatest impact on health status, even more than the motor impairments commonly associated with the disease.

Many people are not aware that anxiety and depression are clinical symptoms of Parkinson's, just as are slowness of movement, rigidity and tremor. They are known as non-motor symptoms. Insomnia and other sleep disorders fall into this category. Therefore, biological factors can influence the onset of anxiety or depression in people with Parkinson's.

Firstly, many of the brain pathways and chemicals affected by Parkinson's are the same as those affected by anxiety and depression. Parkinson's Disease causes changes in areas of the brain that produce dopamine, norepinephrine and serotonin — chemicals that are involved in regulating mood, energy, motivation, appetite and sleep.

Secondly, research suggests many people with Parkinson's Disease experience anxiety or depression two to five years before the diagnosis of Parkinson's Disease, which may mean that depression is not simply a psychological reaction to the illness, but a part of the underlying disease process.

Getting help and treatment for anxiety and depression should be done without delay. This leaflet was made because most people believe that medication is the only treatment for anxiety and depression, but this could not be further from the truth.

As with most of our work, Parkinson's Care and Support UK focuses on improving quality of life naturally. We strongly believe that the best way to do so is by finding the root cause of illness and by using treatments and therapies that do not cause dependence or side-effects.

Treating anxiety or depression successfully requires a holistic approach which incorporates exercise therapy, talk therapy, changes in diet and nutrition and even environmental and lifestyle changes.

# Anxiety in Parkinson's

## What is anxiety?

It is normal to feel anxious or worried in situations that we see as threatening.

In fact, a certain level of anxiety can be helpful in making us prepare for important events such as exams or job interviews, or by helping us escape from dangerous situations.

Anxiety becomes a problem when it lasts a long time, becomes overwhelming, or affects the way we live our day to day lives.

Anxiety in Parkinson's is common, affecting around 40% of people at some point during their illness. Anxiety is not tied to disease progression — it can begin before a Parkinson's diagnosis or develop much later. Additionally, while some people with Parkinson's experience anxiety on its own, many are diagnosed with anxiety along with depression and even though anxiety is less well-studied than depression, it may be just as common. If left unchecked, anxiety can worsen a person's overall health condition. Untreated anxiety can result in extreme tremor, pain, impact on posture, slowness and cause increased stiffness and insomnia.

In some cases, anxiety is directly related to changes in motor symptoms. Specifically, patients who experience "off" periods (when Parkinson's medications have worn off) can develop severe anxiety during these periods, sometimes to the point of full-blown anxiety attacks.

## Symptoms of anxiety

### PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

- Muscle tension
- Light headedness
- Dry mouth
- Sweating
- Trembling
- Hyperventilating
- Nausea

### PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS

- Feeling worried
- Fearing the worst
- Feeling irritable
- Finding it difficult to concentrate
- Insomnia

## What is anxiety?

Everyone experiences anxiety differently. There may be feelings or physical symptoms listed here that you have never experienced. On the other hand, you may have experienced anxiety in ways other than these.

In addition, for some people, feeling anxious is a symptom of an anxiety disorder. Some of the most common of these are:

**Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD):** Feeling anxious for a long time about nothing specific. The feelings are often overwhelming and they may stop you from doing things you would like to do.

**Panic disorder:** Experiencing panic attacks that may come out of the blue. This can cause fear of having more panic attacks and make you avoid certain situations.

**Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD):** Anxiety leads to obsessions (repeated unwanted thoughts) and compulsions (repetitive behaviours or mental acts). These obsessions and compulsions can stop you from living a normal life.

**Phobias:** An intense fear of something specific. The feared object or situation is usually harmless. A phobia will often make you go to great lengths to avoid the feared situation.

If you are experiencing anxiety, you should not face this condition alone. Speak to family and friends so that they are aware of what you are going through. You should also consult your GP, who can refer you for counselling or CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy). Your GP will also be able to advise on effects that any treatments or therapies may have on your Parkinson's medications.

You can contact Parkinson's Care and Support UK (PCSUK) who can provide you with information, advice and support regarding complementary treatments and alternative therapies and who can signpost you to accredited therapists and holistic doctors.

## What is Depression?

Whilst everyone feels sad from time to time and while people with Parkinson's Disease may experience grief in reaction to their Parkinson's diagnosis, depression is different. Sadness is temporary, but depression is persistent lasting for weeks or longer.

Although depression can be caused by biological factors, it can also be caused by psychological factors such as the development of negative thoughts in addition to attitude about living with a chronic illness. This can lead to sadness, helplessness and hopelessness. Dwelling on these feelings may make a person more vulnerable to depression. Environmental factors including being diagnosed with Parkinson's and the ongoing distress of coping with such a life crisis can trigger the disorder and side effects of certain prescription drugs can cause symptoms of depression. Always consider the side effects of all medication before deciding whether or not it is something you wish to use.

Depression, while common in Parkinson's Disease, is often overlooked and undertreated. It is important to be aware of its symptoms, so that if you experience it, it can be treated effectively. Treating depression is one of the most significant ways to decrease disability and improve quality of life.

Most people with Parkinson's will go undiagnosed or untreated for depression; therefore, being diagnosed is a critical first step towards effective treatment and recovery. To be diagnosed with depression, a person must experience one of the following symptoms most of the time over the past two weeks:

- Depressed mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed

## Other symptoms of Depression include

- ✓ Loss of interest in usual activities and hobbies
- ✓ Crying
- ✓ Persistent sadness
- ✓ Decreased attention to hygiene, medical and health needs
- ✓ Feelings of guilt, self-criticism and worthlessness
- ✓ Increased fatigue and lack of energy
- ✓ Change in appetite or eating habits (this could be over-eating or having a poor appetite)
- ✓ Loss of motivation
- ✓ Complaints of aches and pains
- ✓ Feelings of being a burden to loved ones
- ✓ Feelings of helplessness or hopelessness
- ✓ Sleeping difficulties (this could be too much sleep or too little)
- ✓ Poor attention and concentration problems
- ✓ Feeling slowed down or restless inside
- ✓ Thoughts of suicide or a wish for death



## What is Depression?

### Difficulties in Diagnosing Depression in Patients with Parkinson's

Certain symptoms of depression overlap with symptoms of Parkinson's - for example, sleep problems and feeling slowed down occur in both conditions.

Some experts think that depression in Parkinson's often involves frequent, shorter changes in mood versus a constant state of sadness daily.

Many people with Parkinson's express less emotion due to the effect the disease has on the muscles of the face. This symptom, called facial masking, makes a person unable to express emotion through facial expressions.

Many people with Parkinson's do not seek treatment because they often do not recognise they have a mood problem or are unable to explain symptoms. For these reasons, it is helpful to ask a caregiver or loved one if he or she has noticed any changes commonly reported in depression. If you are experiencing depression, you should not face this condition alone.

Speak to family and friends so that they are aware of what you are going through. You should also consult your GP, who can refer you for counselling or CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy). Your GP will also be able to advise on effects that any treatments or therapies may have on your Parkinson's medications.

You can contact Parkinson's Care and Support UK (PCSUK) who can provide you with information, advice and support regarding natural and alternative treatments and therapies and who can signpost you to accredited therapists and holistic doctors.

# What are Complementary Treatments and Alternative Therapies?

Although the terms **complementary** and **alternative** are generally used alongside each other, they do have different meanings.

**A complementary therapy** means you can use it alongside your usual treatment. It may help you to feel better and cope better with your anxiety and depression and treatment.

**An alternative therapy** is generally used instead of conventional medical treatment.

Complementary treatments and alternative therapies is generally used to describe non-pharmaceutical treatments or interventions that fall outside of mainstream healthcare. Complementary and alternative treatments and therapies are vast and have been used for countless ailments and diseases with great success for many centuries. They have been proven safe and effective.

There is an increasing amount of evidence that shows more people with Parkinson's are turning to complementary treatments and therapies to improve their health and quality of life. Many testimonials have revealed relief of Parkinson's symptoms, slowed progression and a better quality of life. They are particularly helpful to treat anxiety and depression by improving mood, energy, decreasing fatigue, encouraging positive thoughts, improving sleep, improving motor symptoms and general wellbeing.

Some of the most popular therapies used for anxiety and depression include exercise, yoga, qigong, music/sound, aromatherapy, relaxation/ meditation, herbal remedies, massage, chiropractic, homeopathy, acupuncture, naturopathy as well as arts.

Some people doubt the effectiveness of these therapies because they have not been financially backed by institutes and large pharmaceutical companies. In order for them to reach clinical trial, it can cost millions of pounds. Running organised clinical trials is how treatments are accepted into mainstream healthcare.

Complementary and alternative therapies, lifestyle and diet changes all make up the holistic approach to tackling anxiety and depression in Parkinson's. PCSUK encourage people with anxiety and depression to educate themselves as much as possible complementary and alternative therapies, diet and nutrition and the effect they can have on your condition. Try to be open to testing out new activities. Many of these can be done at home if you do not feel like leaving the house at times. Visit [www.parkinsonscare.org.uk](http://www.parkinsonscare.org.uk) for more information on our free online exercise classes and activities.

# Complementary Treatments and Alternative Therapies

Parkinson's Care and Support UK have put together the most popular complementary and alternative treatments for treating anxiety and depression in Parkinson's, which have been backed by research. There are many more treatments and therapies available. If you would like further information, please contact Parkinson's Care and Support UK.

## Supplements

### Magnesium

Magnesium is an essential dietary mineral and is the second most common electrolyte in the body. The normal adult value for magnesium is 1.5-2.5 mEq/L. Normal levels of magnesium are important for the maintenance of heart and nervous system function. Deficiencies have been linked to anxiety, depression, fatigue and cognitive decline.

**Useful for:** anxiety and depression

**How:** obtain a full blood analysis from GP to determine if you have a deficiency. This can also be done privately. Magnesium supplements can be bought from health shops. Taking 100-200mg to begin with is a good start for anxiety and depression symptoms. These should be taken for at least 6 months and you should be aiming for the higher end of the normal adult value.

### Vitamin D

Vitamin D plays an important role in mood regulation, as well as nerve and brain health. Research has established a link between vitamin D levels and depression and that taking vitamin D3 supplements may help treat the condition. A level of 20 nanograms/milliliter to 50 ng/mL is considered adequate for healthy people. A level less than 12 ng/mL indicates vitamin D deficiency. Low levels of vitamin D are commonly found in people with Parkinson's and so supplementation is recommended.

**Useful for:** anxiety and depression

**How:** Obtain a full blood analysis from GP to determine if you have a deficiency. This can also be done privately. Vitamin D3 supplements can be bought from health shops. However, some studies suggest that a higher daily intake of 1000-4000 IU (25-100 micrograms) is needed to maintain optimal blood levels. Supplements can be taken in tablet or liquid form. High doses of vitamin D can be toxic and so it is recommended to have regular blood tests to keep an eye on this.

Continued Overleaf → → →

### Vitamin B

B vitamins are a group of eight different nutrients that work together to manage many processes in the body, including stress levels. Vitamin B12 deficiency can cause a number of neurological symptoms, including instability, neuropathy and cognitive defects. Both folate and vitamin B12 deficiencies have been linked to the cause of anxiety and depression. The normal range for vitamin B-12 in the blood is between 200 and 900 nanograms per millilitre (ng/mL), however, you should always aim to be at the higher end. Low levels are under 200 per ng/ml. A good supplement should provide you with around 500mg and should be taken daily.

**Useful for:** anxiety and depression

**How:** obtain a full blood analysis from GP to determine if you have a deficiency. This can also be done privately. There are many Vitamin B complex supplements, which can be bought from health shops (they contain a range of B Vitamins). If you have low Vitamin B levels, be sure to find one with a high form of vitamin B12 and folate. As vitamin B12 is relatively safe, no tolerable upper intake level (UL) has been set for vitamin B12. UL is considered the maximum amount of a substance that can be taken safely without side effects. For low levels of B12 1,000 mcg daily can be taken.

### L-Theanine

L-Theanine is an amino acid that occurs in green and black tea. Some evidence suggests that it is a mild sedative and anti-anxiety agent and many report calming and soothing effects.

**Useful for:** anxiety

**How:** It is recommended to start with the lowest effective dosage of L-Theanine. Supplements often come in 200 mg capsules. People should not exceed 400 mg without first asking a doctor.

### Omega 3

Omega 3 fats play an important role in brain health. They are usually obtained from diet. Taking an omega-3 supplement such as fish oil could be particularly helpful for people with anxiety. A low intake of omega-3 fats can raise the risk of anxiety and depression, therefore taking omega-3 supplements could help prevent or treat these conditions.

**Useful for:** anxiety and depression

**How:** Omega 3 can be taken in capsule or liquid form. Doses for anxiety and depression range from less than 1 g/day to 10 g/day. Major depression has been treated with 2 g/day of an EPA+DHA combination, with at least 60% EPA.

## GABA

Gamma-aminobutyric acid (GAMMA) is an amino acid and neurotransmitter in the brain. When there's not enough GABA, anxiety can worsen and so supplements with GABA may help replace lost GABA.

**Useful for:** anxiety

**How:** The average supplement dose can range from 500 to 750 mg. Either dose may be split across multiple tablets or taken as a once-daily tablet.

## 5-HTP

5-HTP is a safe, natural treatment for anxiety. 5-hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP) is a neurotransmitter. It's a precursor to serotonin. That's the "happiness neurotransmitter" in the human brain. The brain needs L-tryptophan and 5-hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP) to manufacture serotonin. L-tryptophan and 5-HTP are widely used alternative treatments for anxiety. Both amino acids are essential for the manufacturing of serotonin in the brain.

**Useful for:** anxiety

**How:** starting 5-HTP at low doses is recommended. Research shows that 50 milligrams to 100 milligrams taken three times a day—is a safe and effective approach for chronic anxiety that is well tolerated without excessive daytime sedation. Taking 5-HTP at bedtime improves sleep and reduces daytime anxiety.

## Exercise

Different forms of exercise can lower stress, relax you, and help lessen the symptoms of anxiety and depression. Exercise can also improve your energy, balance, and flexibility. In general, it's a safe, effective, and easy way to better your health.

**Useful for:** anxiety and depression

**How:** there are many forms of exercise which can be beneficial for anxiety and depression. If you are experiencing high levels of anxiety, you may wish to consider a meditative form of exercise which focus on relaxation and breathing, for example Yoga, Mindfulness Yoga and Qigong. For depression, Tai Chi, aerobic and running produce excellent results. The main thing is to find something you like and do it regularly.

As always, check with your doctor before you take on something new or ramp up your activity level.

## Yoga

Yoga is one of the most beneficial complementary therapies for anxiety and depression in Parkinson's Disease. As exercise, Yoga is a natural way to increase serotonin production. Serotonin production plays a role in the treatment of depression. Serotonin is believed to play a major role in happiness.

Yoga is also a great treatment for anxiety. It increases your heart rate variability (HRV), or change in time between heart beats, by increasing the relaxation response over the stress response in the body. A high HRV means that your body is better at self-monitoring or adapting, particularly to stress.

Practicing Yoga involves the use of stretching, meditation, holding poses and controlled breathing. Yoga can energise the body and mind, improve concentration and reduce stress. It has vast benefits for balance, flexibility and mobility, which many people with Parkinson's have trouble with.

**Useful for:** anxiety and depression

**How:** Yoga can be practised in groups/ classes or can be done on a 1-2-1 basis with a Yoga Instructor. It can be practiced multiple times a week. Parkinson's Care and Support UK offer free Yoga classes at venues throughout the UK and online.

## Mindfulness Yoga

Mindfulness Yoga mixes Yoga with meditation and controlled breathing. It is different to many traditional Yoga practices in that there is less of a focus on the exact posture achieved and more focus on body/ mind awareness rather than the 'perfect' pose. In a Mindful Yoga class you will be encouraged to work within your body mind limitations, accepting yourself today with compassion and applying yourself within that framework.

Research has shown that intervention with Mindfulness Yoga can ease anxiety and depression in people with Parkinson's, in addition to improving movement symptoms.

**Useful for:** anxiety and depression

**How:** Mindfulness Yoga can be practised in groups/ classes or can be done on a 1-2-1 basis with a Yoga Instructor. It often involves being sat on the floor or laying down. It can be practiced multiple times a week. Parkinson's Care and Support UK offer free Mindfulness Yoga classes online.

## Qigong

Qigong (ch'i kung, chi gong), China's ancient system of energy medicine, consists of exercises and meditations that stimulate the flow of qi, life energy. Qigong looks similar to Tai Chi, but this moving meditation tends to use simpler movements and has no martial intent. Designed to restore balance of body, mind, and spirit, it includes exercises for health and vitality as well as "External Qi Healing", a non-contact energy-field therapy to assess energy, dissolve blockages, and replenish life-force. It is an energy-based exercise which has different forms.

**Useful for:** anxiety and depression

**How:** Qigong can be practiced in small groups with a Qigong Practitioner. The classes are often interactive and can be carried out multiple times a week, although it is best to start off with one or two sessions a week and build from there. Zhineng Qigong is a form used at Parkinson's Care and Support UK, in which we provide free classes in some areas of the UK and online.

## Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a way of paying attention to the present moment, using techniques like meditation, breathing and Yoga. It helps us become more aware of our thoughts and feelings so that, instead of being overwhelmed by them, we're better able to manage them.

Mindfulness has shown positive effects on several aspects of whole-person health, including the mind, the brain, the body, and behaviour, as well as a person's relationships with others. Mindfulness can be used as a tool to manage your wellbeing and it can help with a number of conditions, including stress, anxiety and depression.

**Useful for:** anxiety and depression

**How:** Mindfulness can be practised in person, either through a group course or a one-to-one with a trained mindfulness coach. You can use online resources, books and audio, where you can learn through self-directed practice at home. Even though mindfulness is understood to have Buddhist origins, you don't need to be religious or spiritual to practise mindfulness.

## CBT

CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) is the leading and most successful approach for treating anxiety and depression. It is a talking therapy that can help to treat mental health problems by changing the way you think and feel. With regular CBT, anxiety and depression can be cured and quality of life and wellbeing significantly improved. This in turn can improve other Parkinson's symptoms.

CBT encourages patients to develop more positive thoughts about themselves, the environment around them and their future: in this case the outcome related to their illness. The goal is to help a person understand how their thoughts affect their emotions and behaviour and to replace those reactions with positive or constructive alternatives. Through therapy you will focus on challenging and changing unhelpful cognitive distortions and behaviours, improving emotional regulation, and the development of personal coping strategies that target solving current problems.

**Useful for:** anxiety and depression

**How:** You can speak with your GP about the possibility of using cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). It usually involves being put on a waiting list to receive treatment via the NHS. CBT can be taken up privately, where therapists will usually charge for 30-60 minute sessions.

Parkinson's Care and Support UK are developing a CBT Helpline for people with Parkinson's who are suffering from anxiety and depression so that we can provide the mental health support people with Parkinson's need today. For more information visit [www.parkinsonscare.org.uk/cbt](http://www.parkinsonscare.org.uk/cbt)

## Counselling / Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy or "talk therapy" refers to many varieties of counselling. This type of treatment can help people diagnosed with an anxiety disorder understand their illness and better manage their symptoms. Mental health professionals who provide therapy include psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, licensed professional counsellors, and specially trained nurses.

Talk therapy involves a trained therapist listening to you and helping you to find ways of dealing with emotional issues. Counselling sessions can provide vital support, understanding and education. Patients may be seen alone, as a couple or family, or in a group. Sessions can also take place over the phone or face-to-face depending on what suits you. Counselling or psychotherapy offers two advantages: no drug side effects and coping skills that can be used over the long term.

**Useful for:** anxiety and depression

**How:** You can speak to you GP about being referred to counselling, however there are usually long waiting lists on the NHS. Alternatively, you might choose to pay for private counselling therapy. If you would like further information or to be signposted to a counsellor, please email [info@parkinsonscare.org.uk](mailto:info@parkinsonscare.org.uk)



## Reiki

Reiki is a non-evasive, complementary therapy with no side effects that can enhance daily life of people with Parkinson's.

Reiki is the ancient practice of channelling universal energy (or 'Chi'), to heal and harmonise the body. It is said to bring you back into equilibrium by balancing the seven major chakras (energy centres) in the body. Reiki works on the connection between mind and body.

Reiki calms the mind and relieves stress, harmonising and balancing your emotional state. It can be helpful for releasing trauma that is trapped deep within body cells. This can be particularly useful for those who suffer from anxiety.

**Useful for:** anxiety and depression

**How:** Each person will respond differently to this complementary therapy, but you may find that it helps with deep relaxation and improves your vitality. As a method of channelling positive energy, it can be a good way to combat feelings of negativity which may help with anxiety and depression.

It is generally best to receive three to five Reiki treatments one to two weeks apart. Once you see yourself improving you can space out treatments to one month or six weeks apart. Receiving regular Reiki treatments is excellent self-care and helps you to maintain holistic balance.

## Herbal Medicines

Herbal medicine (or 'herbalism') uses plants or plant extracts to treat, prevent or cure illness, and promote good health. Like most other complementary treatments and alternative therapies, herbal medicine takes a holistic approach – it aims to treat the whole person, not just the symptoms, and to encourage the body to heal itself. The use of specific herbs has provided relief from the symptoms of anxiety and depression in people for decades.

If you are taking medications, you must discuss starting any herbal medicines with your GP beforehand to prevent side effects from poor interactions.

## Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*)

Ashwagandha is an adaptogen and Ayurvedic remedy. Some research suggests that it may be just as effective as certain medications in reducing anxiety.

**Useful for:** anxiety

**How:** The average supplement dose is around 900 mg. This may be taken as two 450-mg capsules one to two times per day. Taken for 6–12 weeks may reduce anxiety and lower the likelihood of insomnia in people with stress and anxiety disorders.

## Bacopa

Bacopa (*Bacopa monnieri*) extracts can provide neuroprotective activity, or protection of neurons. Research has also found that Bacopa could also reduce cortisol. Cortisol is known as the stress hormone, which plays a role in worsening your anxiety symptoms.

**Useful for:** anxiety

**How:** The average supplement dose is around 500 mg. This may be split across two tablets or taken as a once-daily tablet.

Continued Overleaf → → →

### Lavender

Lavender (*Lavandula officinalis*) has long been a soothing stress remedy. It has subtle sedative effects on the central nervous system that may also help with anxiety and depression.

**Useful for:** anxiety and depression

**How:** Lavender tends to be found in anxiety supplement blends with other herbs. On its own, the average supplement dose is around 400 mg. This may be split across two capsules or taken as a once-daily capsule.

### Valerian

Although valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) is better known as a sleep remedy, it may also help with anxiety. In fact, its root is commonly used as a natural treatment for symptoms of anxiety, depression and even menopause.

**Useful for:** anxiety and depression

**How:** The average supplement dose is around 500 mg. This may be split across two capsules or taken as a once-daily capsule.

### Rhodiola

Rhodiola (*Rhodiola rosea*) is a plant native to alpine regions. It's been used as a nerve tonic and calming agent for hundreds of years.

**Useful for:** anxiety

**How:** The average supplement dose is around 500 mg. This may be split across two capsules or taken as a once-daily capsule.

### Passionflower

Passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*) has been used in herbal medicine for centuries. Early research showed that it might help relieve anxiety and insomnia, however more recent research found that Passionflower was just as effective as a mainstream anxiety prescription. It appears to boost the level of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) in your brain. This compound lowers brain activity, which may help you relax and sleep better.

**Useful for:** anxiety

**How:** Passionflower as a supplement or tincture of the flowers is said to work best. For anxiety, capsules containing 400 mg of passionflower extract twice daily for 2-8 weeks has been used. Also, 45 drops of a liquid extract of passionflower has been used daily for up to one month.

## Finding a therapist

For your safety, it is very important to make sure that any complementary or alternative therapist you see has the necessary training and qualifications. It is a good idea to do your own research and look to those who are able to make recommendations. Friends, family, other people with Parkinson's may be able to advise based on personal experience or recommend someone who is used to working with people with Parkinson's.

## Finding a therapist privately

Finding a private therapist can involve some work for you. Professional bodies that represent certain types of therapy can put you in touch with a reputable therapist. But remember that therapists volunteer to register, and not all do so.

It will depend on the type of therapy you are interested in, but it is best to have a therapist who is registered with one of the following:

**The Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC)**

**The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).**

**The UK Federal Regulator for Complementary Therapies (GRCCT)**

**British Complementary Medicine Association (BCMA)**

For more information on Complementary and Alternative Therapists, visit [www.parkinsonscare.org.uk](http://www.parkinsonscare.org.uk)

## Supporting our work

Parkinson's Care and Support UK (PCSUK) relies on donations from the public to fund our free CBT Helpline, exercise classes, home-based neurological physiotherapy, respite care, information and education and research. You can help us to improve the lives of people living with Parkinson's today by making a contribution to the charity.

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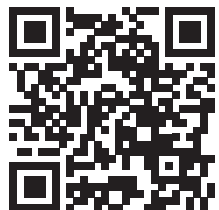
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