

Table Tennis (Ping Pong) is Excellent Therapy for Individuals with Parkinson's Disease (And good exercise for everyone who plays)

1. **What types of exercise are best for people with Parkinson's disease?** There is increasing evidence that **aerobic and learning-based exercises could be neuroprotective** in aging individuals and those with neurodegenerative disease. **Exercises challenging the individual to change tempo, activity, or direction** (what is referred to as "random practice" exercises) benefit people with Parkinson's disease. Exercises that require balance and preparatory adjustment of the body [and] ... exercises that promote attention and learning are beneficial. **Types of exercises that do this** [include]: Sports (**ping pong**, golf, tennis, volleyball). (From the web site of: **The Parkinson's Disease Clinic and Research Center at the University of California, San Francisco**).
2. In a recent study, Clinical neuroscientist and psychiatrist **Dr. Daniel Amen** argues in his book, *"Making a Good Brain Great"*, that playing table tennis can increase brain activity. **Amen calls table tennis the best brain sport.** It improves hand-eye coordination. It's aerobic, uses both upper and lower body and causes you to use many different areas of the brain to function. In an article entitled, "Stupidity and the brain", Dr. Amen says, "Golf is good. Tennis is terrific. **Table tennis is the best sport in the world!**"
3. **Dr. Gary Guten** was a top orthopedic surgeon, a team physician for the Milwaukee Brewers. He has co-written *"Parkinson's Disease for Dummies"*. Guten argues that physical activity is especially therapeutic and urges people with the disease to exercise, **often choosing activities that stress sideways movement.** "When I move sideways, there's very little tremor," he said, [and] the same phenomenon **applies to table tennis**, where the player crabwalks side to side. Guten uses a robotic ball server for frequent workouts.
4. **Dr. Wendy Suzuki**, professor of neuroscience and psychology at NY University states "In ping pong we have enhanced motor functions, enhanced strategy functions, and enhanced long-term memory functions." Table tennis works parts of the brain that are responsible for movement, fine motor skills and strategy.
5. **Table Tennis Proving Therapeutic to People with Parkinson's** (KMTR-TV Morning News; Springfield, OR)

...Frank says every day is a challenge, but **he believes he's been able to slow the progression of Parkinson's by playing ping pong 5-6 times a week.** "The **rapid decision-making**, the ball coming back and forth with some force and frequency, ...**you've got to make decisions to move, to reach, to stretch, to decide how hard or how soft and all of these calculations seem to employ the section of the brain that tells us what to do in our body.**"