

What is the Parkinson's PowerUP Exercise Class?

This is a community-based exercise class for individuals with Parkinson's disease who are in the early stages of the disease or those with young onset PD, with the goal of intensive exercise engagement to promote the neuroprotective effects of exercise and delay disease progression. The activities in the class address improving movement amplitude, dynamic strength, balance, and agility using a wide range of high level exercise and mobility challenges. The class was developed by and is run by GVSU Professor Cathy Harro, a board-certified Neurologic Clinical Specialist who is both LSVT-BIG certified clinician and PWR! Wellness trained clinician. Her passion is to improve the health, fitness, and quality of life for persons with PD, empowering them to stay active. Students in the GVSU DPT program volunteer to assist with the class (2 volunteers per class session), engaging in modeling exercises, partner work with class members, and assisting with safe guarding during agility activities. The class is run at GVSU Center for Health Sciences (CHS 207 therapeutic lab) every Monday from 4:15-5:30 (volunteers arrive at 4:00 to assist with set up and greet class members) during the academic year, Sept thru April. There is no charge to participate as this is a service-based activity. Interested participants must complete a physical therapy evaluation by Cathy Harro PT, DPT to join the class to ensure they are at an appropriate level for the class and a signed physician approval is needed to participate.

When in the program is this opportunity available?

Summer of the 1st Year in Program through the end of 3rd year in program. Since students in the 1st year summer have not yet had the neurologic content in DPT curriculum, Professor Harro provides the class an introductory overview training session on movement and balance dysfunction in Parkinson's disease, the goals of the exercise class, an overview of the exercise components and tips on modeling exercises/activities and safe guarding. We also discuss the student volunteers' role in the class.

Who can participate?

Any DPT student beginning after the first clinical. Students must be in good academic standing in the program.

Where does this opportunity take place?

GVSU Center for Health Sciences, room 207 therapeutic lab. Mondays 4:15-5:30pm; Sept—April

What is the average time commitment for this opportunity?

It is a 1.5 hour total time commitment per class; students may volunteer for as times/classes that they would like to attend and are encouraged to volunteer throughout their 3 years in the DPT program. Student volunteer coordinator for PD exercise class opportunities in collaboration with class instructor, Professor Harro, manage recruitment and sign-up sheets.

Who is the best person to contact to obtain more information on this opportunity?

Cathy Harro harroc@gvsu.edu

Does this opportunity cost anything to the student(s)?

There is no cost to students to participate.