

Center for Parkinson's Disease

Medical Director's Note

A "Medicine" for Parkinson's Called Endorphin

I, like many other doctors who treat patients diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, generally have mixed feelings about the "latest, greatest and newest" medicine to become available. The mixed feelings are hope and worry. We have a hopeful feeling that a new medication will be effective, but we also have a worrisome feeling that the new medication will have intolerable side effects. With many medications (new or old), the rule of thumb is "start low and go slow." Then, over time, increase the dose until the desired results are achieved.

Endorphin is not a new medicine. It's an old medicine that you have had inside you since the day you were born. The word "endorphin" is made from two words: endogenous and morphine. Endogenous means "naturally produced by our bodies." Morphine is a painkiller (an opiate). Though morphine can be extracted from the poppy plant in large quantity, our own bodies naturally produce tiny amounts of morphine to help us deal with pain and stress.

Endorphin is a hormone that is naturally produced in our brains. Endorphin stimulates the opiate receptors in the brain. In other words, endorphin gets a brain's opiate receptors primed and ready to receive the tiny amounts of morphine our brains produce. Endorphin reduces pain and boosts pleasure, resulting in a feeling of well-being.

Certain activities cause our brain to produce endorphin. These activities include smiling, laughing, singing, dancing, and enjoyable exercise. You probably have heard the old saying "laughter is good medicine." Or maybe you have heard these biblical words, "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."

Laughing, singing, and dancing activities require the use of muscles (facial, diaphragm, and limb muscles). So when muscles are used, endorphin is produced. An example of muscles causing the production of endorphin is what joggers call "runner's high." Jogging causes the production of endorphin and causes joggers to feel good. But jogging is not appropriate for all Parkinson's patients. However, laughing, singing, dancing and boxing are all enjoyable exercise activities offered through Stony Brook Southampton Hospital's Center for Parkinson's Disease.

Exercise causes the production of endorphins which decreases the pain and stress of Parkinsonian symptoms. Exercise is definitely the key. Therefore, to have better mood and to reduce the stress of Parkinsonian symptoms, EXERCISE! Start low and go slow until the desired effect is reached. Don't exercise until it hurts...exercise until it feels good. Exercise is neuro-protection and slows the progression of Parkinson's. Now repeat after me: "neuro-protection slows progression." Say it every day. (It's sort of a catchy phrase...don't you agree?)

Exercise is still the best way to generate a positive attitude. Exercise produces endorphins. Exercise makes you feel good.

Olga McAbee, MD, FAAN
Director of Neurology
Medical Director, Center for Parkinson's Disease at Stony Brook Southampton Hospital

EAT WELL with Parkinson's



On June 22nd we launched our first EAT WELL with Parkinson's cooking & nutrition class - thank you to all who attended! Developed as a collaboration between the Center for Parkinson's Disease and the East End Food Institute, the workshop is led by Paula Montagna, MS, RD, CDN, Director of Clinical Nutrition at Stony Brook Southampton Hospital.

We started the morning with a Meditation to help stimulate our Vagus Nerve and promote gastric motility. Focusing on gut health, we discussed easy ways of incorporating prebiotics and probiotics to keep our microbiome strong and promote improved gastrointestinal functioning to address some of the symptoms associated with Parkinson's. The menu featured seasonal fruits and vegetables sourced from local farms including Balsam in Amagansett, Green Thumb and Hank's in Water Mill, and

Foster's in Sagaponack. We prepared a delicious Spring Green Salad topped with sweet strawberries and a minty orange yogurt dressing, black bean sweet potato burgers, an anti-inflammation carrot-ginger-turmeric soup with fresh turmeric and ginger, and a luscious strawberry crisp for dessert. The workshop was very hands-on, challenging our dexterity and fine motor skills, while cultivating our own inner chef. We concluded the morning with a shared meal, enjoying the food and friendship!

We plan to offer an EAT WELL with Parkinson's workshop series starting Fall 2019.

Date and details to be announced shortly!

Ping Pong Mondays

Ping Pong Mondays launched this summer at the **John Jermain Memorial Library** in Sag Harbor!

We meet once a month for a friendly game of table tennis, snacks and good company.

The library is thrilled to host Ping Pong Mondays, and our next date is **August 12th**. For more information, or to sign up, please call: (631) 726-8800.

Hope to see you there!



Rock Steady Boxing



Coach Seth's Corner

RSB - Hampton Bays has grown quickly over the past few months. We have added four additional classes, and none of this would be possible without my amazing team of coaches and volunteers.

Coach Michelle's Corner

Our coaching team has grown in Sag Harbor! All of my new coaches have been with me since we first began RSB classes in Sag Harbor back in September 2017 - starting as volunteers!

Mike Delisio started volunteering in class and cheering on his wife Joanne Delisio. Together in class, they pack a powerful punch! Mike became a certified coach this spring and stepped right up, becoming an Assistant Coach in several of our classes. He is incredibly passionate, open to learning new drills and helps out with everything. He is an avid runner himself and ran the Boston marathon this year!

Breahna Arnold started as a volunteer with Michelle in Sag Harbor and quickly stepped up into the role of Assistant Coach here in Hampton Bays when we needed her. She received her RSB certification last winter and leads our Tuesday and Thursday classes. Breahna is passionate about Rock Steady Boxing and it shows in her dedication and tough love attitude. She pushes boxers to the max, all with a smile and compassionate energy.

I am so grateful to welcome Breahna and Mike to our team!

-Coach Seth

Michael Green and **Rita Gates** were in the very first class! Having been long-time Martial Arts students with me, they would stay after their own classes to volunteer for Rock Steady Boxing. Their humor, love and compassion create a connection with the boxers on many different levels. Today, both Michael and Rita help out as Assistant Coaches, and are my go-to coaching team if I am absent for any reason!

Panadda Tumino also started as a volunteer. Her father suffered from Parkinson's disease for many years. Because he lived in Thailand, it was difficult for Panadda to see him as often as she would have liked. When she did travel to her homeland, she spent weeks caring for him. Today, Panadda is a great asset for our level 3/4 class. Her compassion and warmth is contagious, and she packs great energy into the class! The boxers enjoy her drills and all the goodies she bakes for special occasions and celebrations at RSB Sag Harbor!

Emiley Nill started as a student volunteer in September 2017, earning many community service hours to fulfill her graduation requirements from Pierson HS. Emiley is our newest and youngest coach at 18 years of age! She is currently home in Sag Harbor on break from college, SUNY Cortland where she is enrolled in the Physical Education program. Emiley enjoys teaching us how to be comfortable on the mat/ground, fall prevention and safety.

As the head coach at RSB Sag Harbor, I have complete confidence in my coaching team. I would be lost without them! Welcome to our new coaches!

-Coach Michelle



Boxer Profile

I have been living in Sag Harbor since 1995. My husband Steven and I bought a charming little 200 + year old house and I have spent many hours gardening, landscaping, renovating the house, and commuting to NYC, for my work in the film and television industry as a set decorator.

In 2014 I had some back problems and surgery in February of that year. While doing physical therapy for the surgery, I noticed I was having some trouble walking. After consultation and tests with a neurologist, I was diagnosed in December 2015 with Parkinson's. In my research I found a support group that met at Parrish Hall, Stony Brook Southampton Hospital each month.

At one meeting, Michelle Del Giorno was the guest speaker and there was a discussion about Rock Steady Boxing. Michelle asked how many of us would be interested. The response was overwhelming. Sensei Michelle teamed up with Sarah at the Center for Parkinson's Disease and began Rock Steady Boxing classes in the Fall of 2017 in Sag Harbor. I was one of her first students. She now has 6 classes and many assistant coaches. The program continues to grow!

There are days I find it hard to walk and wonder about getting through the day much less the class. But, I go with my wonderful corner person, Nga (Nina) Ngyuen, and find that I'm able to get through the class, and leave with more energy for whatever the day offers. I have a feeling of accomplishment and better state of mind. I have met some wonderful people in the Rock Steady class - assistant coaches Rita, Panadda, Emily, Michael, and my fellow boxers. Their strength, stamina and humor keep me going.

They say there is no cure for Parkinson's but Rock Steady comes pretty close!

-Pamela Turk

Sing Out Loud



The word is **out** - Sing **Out** Loud, that is! We have a record number of 20 people in our summer mini-session at Guild Hall in East Hampton. So one could say the summer brought us traffic in a good way with new participants visiting our beautiful community and delighted to find a place to sing.

The East End press did a marvelous job getting the word out about Sing Out Loud this past spring - almost every paper had coverage, which then culminated in the program's very own segment on Channel 12 News in June. Everyone wants to sing!

The summer session continues with Bridgehampton resident, Karen Hochstedler, as our Accompanist. We've been singing show-tunes, pop tunes and Standards while also sharing stories about the songs - who sang them, who wrote them, the movie/musical they're from and where we were when we first heard the song.

Being at Guild Hall has also been extra special. The staff has been vocal about how much they enjoy hearing the singing through the hallways. Plus, our first class was held on the stage - which brought delight to many as they said "Now we can finally say that we sang at Guild Hall."

Stay tuned for details about the Fall. Happy Summer!

In the Know...

Are you interested in participating in a **Patient Centered Outcomes** research survey? The Parkinson Alliance conducts annual surveys, the results of which create a lasting educational resource with important advice to help individuals with Parkinson's, caregivers, and clinicians alike.

For more information call the Parkinson Alliance at 1-800-579-8440.

Parkinson's Disease Care NEW YORK is a multi-disciplinary Parkinson's care network in New York State. The coordinated telemedicine program provides FREE specialized PD care from the dedicated PDCNY team at the University of Rochester. To find out more, or to see if you qualify, visit their website at: www.pdcny.org.