

Welcome!

Hi everyone!

Welcome to this issue of the NeuroFIT Neuron. For our "Spotlight On" segment we interviewed Warren. Warren always brings a positive attitude and energy to the class and has even been known to count correctly during Coach Cheryl's reformer exercises!! Get to know a little more about Warren in this issue.

Bill will be talking about music therapy for PD and how to stay safe when you are out walking.

Rose Beattie, vocal coach, stopped by to teach everyone how to use their voices and liked it so much she now volunteers with Friday's class. Welcome Rose!

Our long search for someone who would have what it takes to be a Neurofit coach finally came to an end, and we would like to introduce Jen. Most of you have already met Jen but if not please introduce yourself. Jen will be coaching Tuesday class with me as well as stepping in when needed. She also teaches yoga here at the studio so check out one of her classes.

Diane, Karen, Wayne, Clinton and Paul joined the group. Welcome all of you to the NeuroFIT family and all the craziness that goes along with it.

So sit back and enjoy this issue of the NeuroFIT Neuron!

Coach Heidi

Spotlight On Warren

1. Why Neurofit?

I read early on after my diagnosis that regular exercise was beneficial. A neighbor was shown a brochure by Kate and

she knew about my diagnosis. She took one and gave it to me and it seemed like a good program with people facing the same challenges.

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Inside

Welcome!	1
Spotlight on Warren	1-2
Assistive Tech	1
Coaches Corner	2
Medical News	3
Closing Bits	4

Assistive Tech

Occasional nature walks improve your brain, body, and balance. Most people bring the common sense items. What about bringing maps or emergency contact gear?

With today's cell phones, a map is a download away. Google Maps or Gaia GPS have excellent terrain maps with map download capability for low service areas.

What happens if you're injured outside of cell phone range? On longer hikes, consider an emergency locator. You can send text updates or call for emergency help in the worst-case. These devices are made by several manufacturers. Here's a link to the Garmin website: <https://www.garmin.com/en-US/c/outdoor-recreation/satellite-communicators/>.

Happy hiking!

Warren continued ...

2. What was your reaction to being diagnosed with PD?

There was initially shock about the diagnosis and fear about the future.

3. Where do you find support?

My wife Katie is a great support and encourager. My kids have

been great. The NeuroFIT family. You can ask anyone a question and Heidi and Cheryl are great at pushing us to improve.

4. One piece of advice for newly diagnosed - Parkinson's patients.

Be careful what and how much you read on online. Everyone has different symptoms and some of what's out there can be depressing and extreme.

5. How do you like to spend your free time?

We like to travel when we can. I like to ride my Peloton Bike on days I don't have NeuroFIT. My wife and I like to walk on a local trail. In the evenings I like to watch the Mariners and on Sunday's the Seahawks.

Coaches Corner

So what is balance?

Simply put, it's the ability to distribute your weight in a way that allows you to stand or move without falling. Sounds easy, huh?

Now let's look a little deeper.

Good balance requires the coordination of several parts of the body, including the central nervous system, inner ear, eyes, muscles, bones, and joints.

Now let's add Parkinson's, medications and aging.

Difficulties with balance and walking are linked to

the brain changes that take place with PD. For people who don't have PD, balance is automatic, a reflex. Some medications that people take, including some PD meds, can cause light headedness and dizziness.

And just for good measure, let's throw in aging. None of us are getting any younger and as we age poor balance due to loss of muscle strength and joint flexibility can become an issue. Poor eyesight and slower reaction times can also contribute to a higher risk of falling.

Is all this information making you feel helpless? Well don't!

All the balance exercises we do in class increase

coordination and strength, working your core muscles, lower back and legs, allowing you to move freely and steadily. And while these exercises can be challenging at times, consistency is the key.

As a coach, I see improvements on a regular basis. You may feel that you aren't improving but believe me you are! On days when you feel frustrated, give yourself some grace and just breathe. Improvements happen however small, and it's all down to your consistency and hard work. You've got this!

Coach Heidi

Medical News

Music Therapy for Parkinson's Disease - Cueing and Entrainment

Cueing and entrainment in music therapy are two related techniques used in music therapy. Both can treat neurological disorders, such as Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, and stroke. Cueing uses a changing tone or musical rhythm to help train a person to move a limb smoothly and consistently. It can also help with speech disorders, as was illustrated in the movie "The King's Speech." In the movie, King George VI, who has a speech impediment, learns to talk smoothly and in a relaxed manner without a stutter. The music therapy technique used in the King's case is 'melodic intonation therapy.'

These same techniques can assist a person with Parkinson's disease (PWP). Music engages more of the brain than physical therapy alone – music therapy and physical therapy combined produce an even more effective result. Raising and lowering your arm while listening to a rising and falling rhythm can help a PD patient smooth a tremor and increase the range of motion in that arm. And after several weeks of training, the affected limb has a lasting improvement. This improvement is the "cueing" ability of music, and it helps to work around or regulate damaged portions of the brain.

Rhythmic entrainment is another technique for helping a person with Parkinson's. Ever notice that one side of your body does not synchronize with the other? The effect is like a competitive rowing team that is not synchronized. The rowing shell goes slowly and wanders all over the course. Add a coxswain calling stroke, and the shell moves firmly and cleanly through the water.

In a normal brain, the dopamine-producing nerve cells regulate the stroke. Without dopamine, movements are erratic and disorganized. Now add music with a solid rhythmic pulse. You may see a noticeable improvement in your walking gait with any luck! PWPs who suffer from gait freezing may also see a reduction in freezes. This effect is "entrainment." If you've ever been to a dance or tapped your foot to the music, you've felt musical entrainment. A trained music therapist can help select music and a music tempo that maximizes the therapeutic effect. Even without a music therapist, the next time you go for a walk, pop a set of earbuds in your ears (hopefully in a safe, low-traffic area!). Select a song with a solid beat to which you can start walking. You may be amazed at the difference in your gait and walking speed!

Next newsletter, we'll examine how music can enhance memory and cognition. Music has a fantastic ability to help us recall memories from throughout our life and may help us make new ones.

Closing Bits ...

Team NeuroFIT Reformers attended the NW Parkinson's Walk in May and managed to raise over \$3,000 for the organization. The Northwest Parkinson's Foundation is your local, independent non-profit that offers a variety of services and programs to the PD community. Check out their programs at nwpf.org

We are in the process of rearranging for Judi Spencer and Victory Drumming to stop by. Unfortunately, Judi broke her foot last month and had to cancel. Watch out for upcoming details to be announced soon.

Tuesday's NeuroFIT class is up and running and going well. If you want any more details about this class, please ask.

If any of you would like to read any back issues of the NeuroFIT Neuron you can find them at <https://neurofitmembers.org>