

Health Coaching Questions

A clinical cheat sheet for promoting physical activity in Parkinson's disease

PROMOTE-PA Study | Institute for Musculoskeletal Health, University of Sydney

How to use:

Try 1–2 questions per session.
Follow the patient's lead.
Listen more than you speak.

Put the **WHY** before the **WHAT**

Listen more than you advise

Aim for confidence 7/10+ before setting goals

1

What would you like to do to be more active?

Open the conversation on their terms. Let them define the goal — don't assume what being more active means to them.

❖ Listen without jumping to solutions.

2

How important is this to you out of 10?

Ask: 'Why was this number not lower?' This draws out their own reasons for change — far more powerful than any clinical argument.

❖ Their reasons matter more than yours.

3

How confident are you out of 10?

Ask: 'Why was this number not lower?' Aim for 7/10+ before setting a goal. If below 7, make the goal smaller first.

❖ Confidence <7? Adjust the goal.

4

What would be different if you made this change?

Help them visualise their future self. 'What would you be able to do? How would you feel? Who else would notice?'

❖ Future casting builds motivation.

5

What will help you make this change?

Explore strengths before barriers: past successes, personal qualities, people who support them, times of day with most energy.

❖ Strengths first — confidence follows.

6

Who could support you?

Social support is one of the most effective behaviour change tools. A walking partner, family member, or exercise group can make the difference.

❖ Connection sustains change.

7

What are the barriers and how could you work around them?

Collaborative problem-solving — don't prescribe. Ask: 'What ideas do you have?' COM-B: Capability? Opportunity? Motivation?

❖ Their solution is more powerful.

8

What's one small thing to change this week?

If-then planning: 'When will you do it? Where? How will you remember?' Write it down, tell someone, put it in the calendar.

❖ Small steps build lasting momentum.