

Up ENDing Parkinson's



How did this all start?



Jon Lessin



In October of 2012, I started doing lessons with Jon. Jon saw positive results both physical and mentally and helped me grow our PD climbing crew. We now have over 160 participants at our Sportrock locations and about 400 additional participants at 40 other locations.

Who Climbs?



- The group has a wide variety of individuals
- Ages 37-90s
- Recently diagnosed to 20+ years into diagnosis

We go outdoors!



Non-Profit status in May of 2022

- Our nonprofit runs on donations, and Inova has been instrumental in helping our local programs expand and flourish through their generous financial and promotional support.
- Inova has supported our programs for over 2 years through the generous donations they receive!

Research has shown that the following help PD

- Strength Training
- Balance exercises
- Cardio, especially high intensity
 - Mobility/Stretching
 - Social interactions
 - Big movements
- Consistent exercise
- OR....just climbing!



Why does climbing help?

- BIG Movements: Making big, repetitive movements at varying speeds
- Strength: Builds core and overall strength in many different muscles
- Mobility and Flexibility used for high steps, long reaches, and lateral movements
- Balance: Weight shifting and knowing where your body is in space
- Visual Cues: Colored climbing holds gives you visual cues for reaching and stepping, which helps with freezing
- Effort Required--level 7+
- Anxiety, depression, pain, sleep, self esteem, social connection
- Stickiness of Climbing: Mentally and physically engaging, fun, feel better, social...
- SAFETY of exercise

Defying Gravity: A Pilot Study of the Effects of Rock Climbing on Physical and Psychosocial Function of Individuals with Parkinson's Disease

- UEP partnered with Marymount from Summer 2024 to Summer 2024
- Tested pre and post tests after 12-14 weeks of climbing, twice/week.
- Participants showed significant improvement in balance, dexterity, grip strength and overall mobility, along with modest improvements in psychosocial aspects such as resilience and quality of life.
- Traditional PD therapies often emphasize physical exercises to improve motor skills, rock climbing offers something uniquely beneficial – a dynamic combination of physical and cognitive challenges. Climbers follow specific routes on the wall, pushing their brains and bodies to adapt.
- Published in the Archives of Physiotherapy

Sportrock Climbing Centers (local locations)

Gaithersburg, MD:

Wednesdays 11-12 and Sundays 12:30-1:30

Alexandria, VA

Mon/Wed/Fri 7:30-8:30am, Tu/Th 9-10am, Sundays 9-10am

Sterling, VA

Tuesdays 7:30-8:30am and 10-11am, Saturdays 9-10am

Contact: UpEndingParkinsons@gmail.com for more information

Video

[CBS with Leslie Stahl\(Youtube\)](#)

- This video shows many of our younger climbers, but we have plenty in their 80s and beyond!

QUESTIONS?