

Dear North Shore Table Tennis Club,

April 8 / 2023

My name is Judy Bjornson.

I am a certified Master Trainer, a Biomechanics Performance Coach and Rehabilitation Specialist.

I have been instructing Parkinson's land and water classes for nine years.

The devastating effects of this disease vary among each individual.

Five of the participants that attend Table tennis every Saturday have attended various classes of mine over the years. They started playing Table Tennis Club and are experiencing positive results. It appears to me that different neuropathways that have been dormant for years are being recruited.

For example, D.P a male participant, feels as if his feet are like lead and he cannot dorsiflex when he walks, so he slides his feet to move. His arm extension and flexion has minimized and a full extension of his arm is almost non-existent. I have witnessed his decline over the last 7 years, even though he participates in various exercise three times a week. Sadly, depression is yet another of the many comorbidities of this disease. He was diagnosed with early onset Parkinsons at 44 years of age. After 35 minutes of table tennis he is able to lift his toes and dorsiflex to step safely in all directions. His arm flexion and extension are almost to full capacity. His endurance is becoming elevate and he smiles. He is finely winning at something.

Erica, very off balance. I train her in the water and in my balance classes. When playing table tennis she is completely balanced with elevated focus, reaction and agility.

Arne, his reaction, agility, dynamic movement are elevated.

Paul says for the first time he feels like there is nothing wrong with him.

High intensity bouts of exercise (HITT) have been proven to get the brain producing dopamine on its own.

Clearly Table Tennis is a life changer for a person with Parkinsons.

Thank you, Luba and all of the fantastic coaches at the North Vancouver table Tennis Club for your professional instruction and bringing hope and positivity into all of these participants lives.

Warm Regards,
Judy Bjornson

**Master Trainer for WaterART Fitness International.org , Hydrotherapist at West Vancouver Aquatic Physiotherapy Clinic
Balance and Mobility Specialist- California State University Co-owner Surefeet.ca, PWR4life Certified-Parkinsons- Arizona U.
Biomechanics and Performance Consultant- Functional Aging Institute**

March 25, 2023

Dear Coach Luba,

RE: Darren Puffer PD Patient

Thank you for introducing Darren and I to the world of table tennis, it's been a steep learning curve for both of us, with so many positive results. I have written a short summary of Darren's experience and I hope you can use this information to help others.

My partner, Darren was diagnosed with early onset Parkinson's disease by Dr. Jason Valerio, clinical professor of neurology, at the movements disorder clinic at UBC in November 2015 at age 45.

Darren has progressive Parkinson's disease symptoms, particularly on the left side of his body. He is dominantly left-handed and struggles with the constant tremors. His left leg drags, and he is very prone to losing his balance.

When diagnosed, he enrolled in special fitness and balance classes along with Song-Shine a vocal therapy group for PD. All these measures he finds very exhausting, but he perseveres knowing this is the only way to manage this horrible disease.

When one of Darren's trainers recommended, we try table tennis it did raise our eyebrows as both of us have never really been exposed to racquet sports.

We attended the orientation day with you and your coaching team. You explained that table tennis helps people with Parkinson's disease through drills that focus on the hand eye coordination. This sport also supports learning new balance and footwork skills to help in everyday living. We were very skeptical.

After attending several sessions, we are starting to see positive results. The regular physical activity Darren gets from the hour and half has been encouraging, and he walks away with a smile, that's a win.

Darren's left hand for the most part has very limited function, as well as limited function in his right arm. As our sessions progressed, Darren started using his left arm to play. He was able to return the ball 62 times in a row, this was an incredible milestone. His dead arm came to life through the hand-eye coordination of the bouncing ball.

The sound of the ball, the movements seem to stimulate things in his brain that make the left arm and leg respond differently.

Parkinson's disease is associated with depression, but this activity seems to change that mood. A friend of his said "it's an hour and half I don't have to think about my disease" and that is so true because you are focused on the little white ball.

Table tennis really increases his cardio more so than any of his other fitness classes he does notice a lot of fatigue in the hour and half but takes breaks as needed.

Table tennis is a hard complete sport, but your approach makes it enjoyable for all people of varying skill sets and even those with disabilities.

As an observer, living with a partner with Parkinson's disease, table tennis is a game changer for his life. We are very hopeful the progress will continue.

And a message to those living with this horrible disease, give table tennis a try and you might be surprised at the results.

Kindest Regards

Richard Foster