

Community-based Alexander technique programming designed and delivered by Parkinson's patient

Presenting Author: Paul Recker, AmSAT, Person with Parkinson's, Ellington CT
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Approach:

- Survey of 9 PD-related symptoms
- Impact of symptoms on daily activities and boxing classes (1-10 scale)
- Impact of symptoms on overall **Confidence and Independence**
- Photo and video documentation relative to boxing classes

Intervention:

- Three individual 45-minute AT classes over the course of a week
- Training in general AT principles and applying AT principles directly to boxing

Paul Recker: *"I was certified as an AT teacher in 2008. I was diagnosed with PD in 2013. Living with PD, I had to make a choice about where to put my limited energy. I now raise awareness in my local community about the benefits of AT principles for people with PD to increase their ease, efficiency and confidence in exercise programs, rehab sessions and daily activities. As a person with Parkinson's and an AT teacher, I am in a unique position to advocate for the benefits of AT to my peers and to advise in the design and implementation of AT-based programs for people with PD and the professionals who serve them."*



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Next Steps: *"I will work with THE POISE PROJECT to design AT-based 'Get Ready To Exercise' courses for people with PD and their care partners, and lead community-based workshops for others with PD in applying AT principles in their exercise classes and normal daily activities. We have identified a Rock Steady Boxing affiliate in Charlotte NC that wants to work with us to continue our research and determine best delivery methods."*



Results:

before after before after before after before after

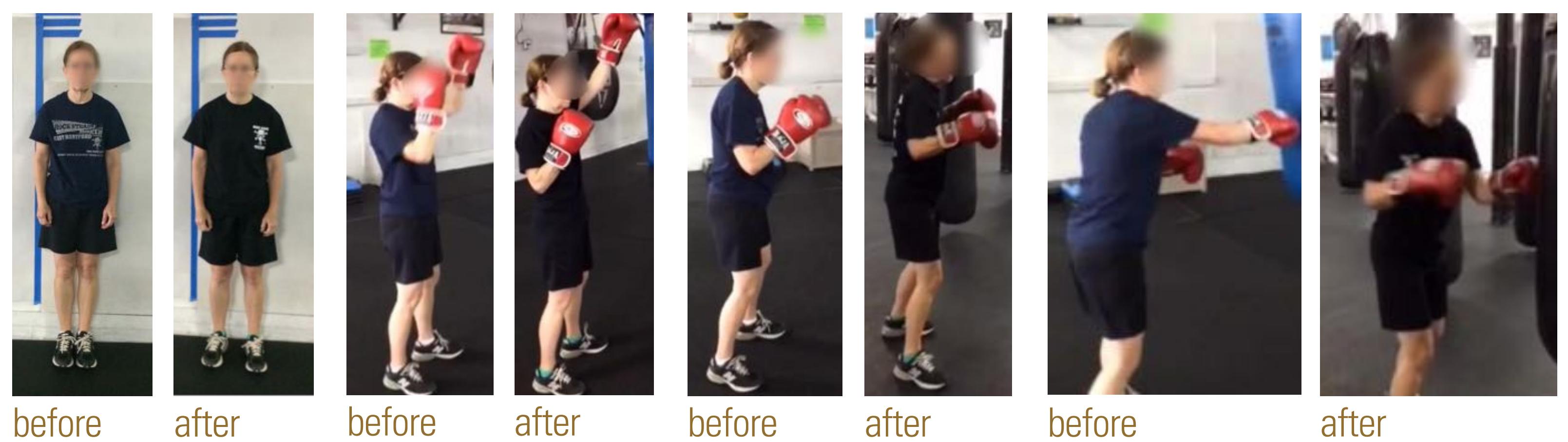
Participant 1 (age 72 diagnosed at 66)

- Modest reduction of symptom impact on Confidence in daily activities and boxing.
- Modest reduction of impact of Gait during boxing.

"Even trying to sleep is enhanced by "letting go" of trying so hard and "resetting". Just being able to relax or reset and start an activity over when it isn't going as I want is invaluable."

"Following AT training the subjects were now 'in sync'!"

— Kelly T. Evans, Rock Steady Boxing Trainer, Just Workout Fitness Studio, Charlotte NC



Participant 2 (age 67, diagnosed at 60)

- Significant reduction of impact of Rigidity, Tremor and Upright Posture on Confidence in daily activities.
- Modest reduction of impact of Bradykinesia and Freezing on Independence in daily activities.
- Significant reduction of impact of Bradykinesia and modest reduction of all symptoms on overall Confidence during boxing.

"I have less discomfort on walks. I have less fatigue from clenched muscles."

"I have strategies to improve my body position, to improve speed and power. Rather than forcing my shoulders back [which causes pain], I can stand upright, with better posture and still be relaxed, instead of tightening. It's almost loosening, and I can sustain it longer because it's comfortable."

Conclusions:

Our small pilot study indicates that AT training has potential to prepare people with PD to be more successful in reducing the impact of symptoms not only in their exercise classes, but also in normal daily activities. In another case study project¹, subjects who had AT training and exercised commented on how AT training helped them improve flexibility, balance and confidence in exercise. They additionally noted increased co-ordination and being able to adjust the exercise to fit their ability and avoid damage.

References:

¹ Long-term effectiveness of Alexander technique classes for managing symptoms of Parkinson's disease: Case Studies. (Marcus et al. WPC 2016 #P40.20).