

SWACSM Abstract

One Year Effects of Rock Steady Boxing Exercise in Parkinson's Disease

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ABSTRACT

Parkinson's disease (PD) is a progressive, neurodegenerative disease resulting in physical function decline. Exercise slows the progression of PD. Rock Steady Boxing (RSB) is a high-intensity, non-contact boxing program designed for people with PD. While it is typically ideal to obtain measurable improvements upon starting an exercise regimen, due to the progressive nature of PD and ensuing decline in function, maintenance is a primary goal in this population. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this study was to determine whether an RSB program maintains physical function in people with PD. **METHODS:** Eighteen people with PD (Hoehn-Yahr levels 1-4, ages 65-83) completed tests of physical function prior to starting the RSB program and were tested again after one year of participation. Tests included the 9-hole peg test, grip strength, timed up and go, 10-meter walk, number of steps during the 10-meter walk, and 5 times sit to stand. Participants attended two or three RSB classes per week for the duration of one year. **RESULTS:** After one year of participating in the RSB program, there were no significant changes in any tests ($p > .1$) which measured upper extremity strength, dexterity, balance, lower extremity strength and endurance. **CONCLUSION:** Participation in RSB exercise may contribute to the maintenance of physical function in people with PD.

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