



## The first step is the most difficult

### Rehabilitation in Parkinson's Disease: Strategies for Cueing

#### Why can't I get going?

- The automatic pilot in the brain does not give the instruction to step.
- The first step you take when walking is the start of a complex sequence of movements, if this is not triggered correctly, the rest of the sequence can't follow.

#### When might this happen most?

- After rising from a chair or bed.
- Moving away from an obstacle such as a kitchen bench when your first step is a turn.
- In crowded or cluttered places.
- When your medication is not working, early in the morning or at night.

#### What can I do about it?

If you feel you can't make a first step, try slowly rocking your weight from left to right, and then command yourself to step, and keep stepping. It might help to count when rocking and stepping.

You could take a step backwards or to the side to unlock the sticking if stepping forwards is difficult.

You could use a stripe on the floor to step over.

You could set a metronome rhythm to rock and step to. The rhythm should be slow and steady to allow you to make your first step large.

If you have got a choice, step into an open space rather than towards furniture or other obstacles.

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