I'm alright in a straight line but changing direction is difficult

Rehabilitation in Parkinson's Disease: Strategies for Cueing

Why do I find turning difficult?

- Turning requires each leg to do something slightly different which is a much more complicated movement than walking in a straight line.
- Your walking rhythm that is generated when walking in a straight line is interrupted.
- Interruption of rhythm may make you freeze, i.e. your feet stick to the floor.
- Turning requires more balance and control.

When might this happen most?

- Sudden changes of direction, e.g. to avoid someone who has stepped in front of you, can be difficult as this requires a fast response.
- When the path you are trying to negotiate is complicated, e.g. narrow walkways, obstacles etc, requiring lots of changes of direction.
- When you have to turn after standing still, e.g. to move away from a bench you have been standing at.
- When your medication is not working well.

What can I do about it?

When needing to turn start to count before the turn and concentrate on not allowing your steps to get shorter as you turn.

Avoid shuffling around on the spot. Instead use a wide arc with large definite steps.

You could place visual markers on the floor anywhere that turning is regularly difficult to encourage large steps.

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Stepping to a slow, steady beat will encourage larger steps and allow your feet to keep moving through the turn.

You may find Information sheet 5 helpful if you freeze.