

Why People with Parkinson's Develop a Softer Voice



If you've been told to "speak up" more often, you're not alone.

One of the most common communication changes in Parkinson's disease is a gradual reduction in vocal loudness. Family members may notice it first. You may feel like you're speaking at a normal volume, yet others frequently ask you to repeat yourself or speak louder.

Why does this happen?

Parkinson's affects the brain systems responsible for movement, and speaking is a highly coordinated motor activity. Producing a strong voice requires precise control of breathing, vocal fold movement, posture, and muscle activation. As Parkinson's progresses, these systems can become less efficient, resulting in a voice that sounds softer, weaker, breathier, or more monotone.

Many people with Parkinson's are surprised to learn that they are often unaware of how quiet their voice has become. What feels like a normal speaking volume may actually be significantly reduced.

Why "Speak Louder" Doesn't Typically Work

Friends and family usually mean well when they encourage someone to speak louder. The problem is that simply trying harder rarely creates lasting change. Communication is not just about effort. It requires retraining the brain and body to coordinate breath support, vocal production, speech clarity, and movement in a way that becomes more automatic over time.

This is why many people continue to struggle despite repeated reminders to increase their volume.

Communication Impacts Quality of Life

A softer voice can affect much more than conversation. It can impact participation in activities, socialization, independence, and overall quality of life. People with Parkinson's may begin avoiding:

- ❖ Group conversations
- ❖ Phone calls
- ❖ Social gatherings
- ❖ Medical appointments
- ❖ Ordering at restaurants
- ❖ Speaking up in public settings



Over time, communication challenges can contribute to frustration, isolation, and reduced confidence and well-being.

The Good News

Voice and communication changes are common, but they are not something you simply have to accept.

Research and clinical experience show that targeted practice focusing on vocal loudness, speech intelligibility, breathing, and communication strategies can help many individuals improve their ability to be heard and understood.



The earlier communication changes are addressed, the greater the opportunity to maintain participation, confidence, and quality of life. If your voice has become softer, your speech less clear, or communication more effortful, know that you are not alone. Communication deserves the same attention and support as movement and mobility in Parkinson's care.

Looking for additional support?



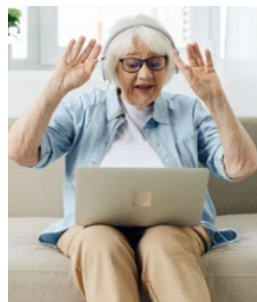
Speak Steady is an online Parkinson's voice, speech, and communication program developed by Jessica Ackerman, MS, CCC-SLP. Designed for self-paced use at home, Speak Steady helps individuals improve vocal loudness, speech intelligibility, breath support for speech, cognition, and everyday communication.

Learn more about [Speak Steady](https://www.jessicaackerman.com): A Clinically Validated Speech Program for Parkinson's: www.jessicaackerman.com

Designed for Real Life

[Speak Steady](https://www.jessicaackerman.com) is designed for:

- ❖ Simple, accessible, guided **at-home use**
- ❖ Daily consistency without overwhelm
- ❖ People at different stages of Parkinson's
- ❖ Ongoing practice that fits into your routine



The program also supports **mindset, motivation, and cognitive engagement**, because communication is deeply connected to how we think, feel, and connect with others.

About the Founder

Jessica Ackerman, MS, CCC-SLP, RYT

Licensed Speech-Language Pathologist,

Parkinson's Specialist, Certified Yoga Teacher



Jessica has spent more than 24 years working with and advocating for individuals with Parkinson's disease and movement disorders. She is a Registered Yoga Teacher, Meditation Teacher, and Wellness Specialist, with advanced training in breathwork, nutrition, and whole-person health. Jessica was the selected speaker for the Parkinson's Foundation recent Webinar "[Speaking & Swallowing in Parkinson's Disease](#)" and has been a presenter at many support groups, RSB groups, and events.

Jessica has supported thousands of individuals and families, served as a long-time Parkinson's advocate, cared for her own mother, and authored published books focused on resilience, health, and living fully.

Speak Steady was created from decades of clinical experience and one core belief: Your voice isn't gone. It just needs the right kind of practice to come through clearly again. Jessica asks, "Are you with me? Let's do this!"

If you'd like guided, Parkinson's-specific support for your voice and communication, you can explore Speak Steady here: www.jessicaackerman.com

Email Jessica with questions jess.speaksteady@gmail.com