

Movement Buddies Program

4-Week Guide

What is the Objective?

The goal of this program is to provide structured tasks, weekly goals and objectives that aim to target physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. You and your buddy can keep each other accountable and even compete to achieve these milestones. This guide offers simple and reasonable goals for you and your buddy to complete.

Week One: Let's Get to Know Each Other!

Objective: *This week, the goal is to get to know your buddy and break the ice. Meeting new people can be difficult and scary! It can be especially vulnerable to open up about your shared struggles with movement disorders as it is a touchy subject and something that you may not have talked about with anyone other than direct family and friends.*

Task:

1. Break the Ice. Meet your buddy.

Here are three ways to do so:

- **Email.** It can be intimidating at first to meet someone. So if you want to take things slow, write an email introducing yourself, and telling your story (however much you feel comfortable with, of course). You can start off with your name, age, occupation/occupational history, hobbies, fun facts, etc. Think of the email as a way of having your buddy getting to know you more personally and get an idea of who you are.
- **Zoom/Video Call.** It would be advised to email first, just to get an idea of what time and day work, and have a formal introduction. A video call can be a great way to communicate if you prefer engaging face-to-face right off the bat. The call can be as brief as 15 minutes or as long as an hour. You can go through the same sort of subjects as is suggested in the email.
- **In-person Meetup.** If you prefer in-person interaction right away, this is the way to go! Email each other to pick a location that works for both of you, and go for it. A walk would be a perfect first meetup as it incorporates both movement and social interaction. However, it really is up to you to decide.

Conversation Guide:

Through any of the means suggested above, talk a little about the movement disorder that you have and what that has been like. Here are some questions you can answer/ask. If you feel uncomfortable talking about the subject or don't like the suggested questions, feel free to come up with your own.

1. What is something that has been hard for you post-diagnosis?
2. What is something that you never expected post-diagnosis?
3. How has your mental health been affected?
4. How have your relationships changed or developed?
5. What do you wish people would stop saying or telling you?
6. What is something you wish you had heard more of?
7. What are you hoping to get out of this program?

Task Two: Make a Goal for Yourself

When you first meet up with a buddy, set a simple goal for the week. Maybe walk 30 minutes every day. Maybe journal for 15 minutes about your thoughts and feelings before you go to bed. Or it can be as simple as stretching for 5 minutes a day! This week, you set your own goals.

(Optional) Task Three: Share Out and Reach Out

The theme of this week is to establish a connection and familiarity with your buddy. As an additional task, you can suggest that your buddy visit one of your favorite places to walk, or a favorite restaurant, beach, or any location of any sort. A place where you can do some sort of movement or social activity would be ideal, but anything works. After you do so, have your buddy go visit said location and take a picture of them there. If you would prefer to stay within the comfort of your home, you can do so by suggesting a favorite movie to watch or show, and you can get to experience something your buddy likes, and be sure to talk about it the next time you talk!

Week Two: Let's Get Physical!

Objective: The objective for this week is to get your body moving and prioritize your physical wellbeing. Moving your body is not only good for you physically, but it is also so helpful in improving your mental wellbeing! This week you and your buddy can do these tasks whilst keeping up with each other through email/text/call. If you wish, you can meet up one of these days to do one of these activities. The goal is to be active for 5/7 days,

allowing for 2 days of rest. 30 minutes for each day is ideal, but feel free to do what works best!

Alternative Task:

If you are not physically able to do any of the suggested tasks, and need a more relaxed version, here are some alternative tasks to refer to.

- Walking
- Seated Arm Workouts
- Seated Leg Workouts
- Standing Core Training
- Knee-Friendly Exercises

Day 1: Let's Get Walking! 30 minutes of walking. Where? Outside, Treadmill, Wherever. You can walk with your buddy, a friend, or a loved one. If you are doing this task by yourself, maybe listen to a motivational podcast while walking, your favorite songs, or just be at peace with your own thoughts.

Day 2: Go For a Swim! You can go to the beach, a lake, or a pool and get in the water and swim! If you're physically limited and can not swim, you can simply put your feet in the water or even lie in a floaty. If even that is too much, you can refer to our alternative task.

Day 3: Yoga Flow. Let's do some yoga. Find a yoga class if you know a place and a local studio! If not, look for a video online and follow along! Refer to our Alternative task if this plan does not work for you!

Day 4: Time to Boogie. That's right, you are going to dance. Life is too short not to. Get up, play your favorite tunes, and move your body! Get friends and family involved, too, and get them involved as well!

Day Five: Your Choice! You can repeat any of the tasks or choose one that you want to do. Today is up to you.

*None of these tasks need to be done in order; do whatever works for you. You can also choose to meet up with your buddy, for this week, one of these days, but that is also up to you!

Week Three: Mental Health Matters

Objective: This week, we are prioritizing our mental health. While none of these activities require actual physical movement, please feel free to continue to set goals with your buddy about physical movement and keep up with your own personal goals. This week, the focus will be on being vulnerable with yourself and how you are feeling. Having a movement disorder can be especially mentally tolling and lonely. We want this week to be an opportunity for reflection and mindfulness. This week would also be a great week to meet up with your buddy in case you haven't already!

Day One: Write and Reflect

Putting your words on paper can be a great starting point to connect with yourself and your emotions. If you have never done this before, that is okay, we can help! If writing is difficult and you can't physically write or type, that is okay too! You can just mentally reflect on these questions. Take 15-30 minutes to yourself in a quiet location to reflect. You can use these questions, or anything that you come up with yourself.

Reflective Questions:

1. How do I feel?
2. What is something I am afraid of saying out loud that I am feeling?
3. What is something that I have never told anyone about what I am experiencing?
Why?
4. What is something that makes me feel happy? How can I experience that more?
5. What are some goals I have for myself? How can I work towards them?
6. What is something that you are proud of?

Day Two: Listen to the Music

Music is actually a great way to reduce stress and anxiety levels and a great way to ease your mind. For this, you would be asked to listen to music, preferably calming, instrumental music, to ease your mind. Spend as little as 5 minutes immersed in the sound of piano, violin, or any calming music of your choice. Take this time to think about what the music makes you feel, and how it makes your body feel. Hold on to those thoughts, and reflect on them when there are times you feel uneasy and tense.

Day Three: An Attitude of Gratitude

Oftentimes, with a movement disorder, one can feel out of control and like a stranger to their bodies. This can be confusing, frustrating, and one can feel at war in their mind and with their bodies. Seeking outward from the war within can help to refocus attention and

seek for glimmers of hope in one's lives. Take a moment to think of 5 things you are grateful for in your life and why. Reflect on how these things have brought you joy and how they have gotten you so far.

Day Four: Positive Mantras

Take some time to create positive mantras and little messages that you want to tell yourself and remind yourself of. Write these down, memorize them, and try to say them to yourself every morning, before you brush your teeth, or before bed. Utilize these words to affirm and circulate positivity. Our minds are powerful, and you will come to believe what you tell yourself.

Some examples include:

I am loved. I am capable. I am worthy.

I am strong. I matter.

I am a gift to this world. My presence is appreciated.

Day Five: Connect and Reach Out

Making connections and sharing valuable time with those you care about can do tremendous things for one's mental health. Call a loved one you have not talked to for a long time, and share a good conversation. Perhaps have lunch, or an outing with a friend, and have some good conversation. The goal of this task is for you to have a valuable human interaction with someone and keep your mind occupied for a little while.

Week 4: Buddy Olympics

Objective: Now that you have gotten acclimated and have tried things to better yourself mentally and physically, you and your buddy are going to compete in a series of challenges for the week. You will keep track of each other's progress and compare at the end of the week to see who wins! This is a light-hearted fun activity to encourage you and your buddy to reach your goals and connect over some friendly competition.

Monday: Get Those Steps in!

Today's goal is to see how many steps you can take in the duration of a whole day! Whether it's 2k steps, 5k, or 10k, it does not matter! You are competing against your buddy to see how many steps you can take and outdo them!

Tuesday: Water Up!

Staying hydrated is important, and it is so important to drink water for your body. The goal today is to drink 8 cups of water! See how long it takes you to reach that goal! Please be safe and don't take extreme measures.

Wednesday: Read a Book

Reading is a great way to exercise our minds and work our brains! If you can, try to spend 30 minutes today reading anything of your choice! Keep track of the amount of how many times a number shows up while reading. At the end, tally up those numbers. It is purely a game of chance, but a fair, fun challenge that will also keep you alert whilst reading.

Thursday: Cook it Up

Today's goal is to cook up a meal, or consume a meal that has as many nutrients, proteins, vitamins, and minerals as you can. Look up the nutrition facts online or see if you can calculate it through any means. Whoever has the most nutritious meal wins!

Friday: Your Choice!

You and your buddy get to decide what challenge you guys have for yourselves and the rules you have! Remember this purely for fun, and up to you.