

Walking football is exactly what it sounds like – a standard game of football where players walk instead of run. It is fun, friendly and can help you feel fitter and healthier.

It's designed to help people get fit or maintain an active lifestyle no matter what their age and fitness, many people who play have seen benefits of lower heart rate and blood pressure, less fat and more muscle, and better mobility.

This is one sporting activity that is suitable for all, which is why three years ago Glasgow Life and Parkinson's UK (Scotland) commenced a study to determine whether Walking Football was suitable for Players with Parkinson's. The pilot program was for ten weeks with ten Players with Parkinson's. The group was mixed gender with several players never having played football before. The pilot was a tremendous success with improvements in general fitness, balance, communication and mental health being reported by all of the players.

The pilot supported by NHS Scotland Parkinson's specialist Physio's developed into the standard model for Players with Parkinson's in Scotland. In March 2024 Parkinson's UK (Scotland) appointed WF Scotland as their partner for Growing The Game in Scotland. Now when you play in a WF Scotland session for players with Parkinson's you can be assured that the Coach will have completed the WF Scotland Coach pathway training consisting of a Parkinson's Active online course for coaches and a WF Scotland Practical Coaching module this means that the session is fully reflective of the needs of players with Parkinson's.

The session consists of:

- A full body warm up (hi intensity or low intensity for less mobile players)
- Games based around football drills.
- A game of Walking Football.
- A full body YOGA type warm down suitable for hi and low intensity players.
- A group get together over a cup of tea.

The sessions are planned monthly in advance with each session designed to work on a specific area of player development. We aim to help PwPs improve on the following:

- General overall Fitness and Conditioning.
- Balance and Co-ordination
- Cognitive Awareness
- Communication Skills
- Spatial Awareness
- Mental Health

## Case Study

The following is a text-based case study of our WF Scotland and CHSS player of the month for April 2024. Kath Kimmet. “Kat “plays her football at Drumchapel United and Giffnock Ladies in Glasgow. She has recently returned to playing after DBS surgery.

### Why did you get involved in walking football?

**Kath:** “It allows me to continue my participation in football, when I thought my playing days were behind me. I wanted to increase my fitness levels to help my body cope with the symptoms of Parkinsons Disease.”



### What positive impact has walking football had on your life?

**Kath:** “It has improved my mental and physical wellbeing. The social aspect of taking up the sport has proved to be as, if not more, important than the fitness benefits.”

### What would you say to encourage others to come along?

**Kath:** “Whether or not you have played football before is irrelevant. The emphasis at all sessions is placed on the physical and mental health benefits and the importance of creating a comfortable environment where all are welcome.”