



## **My Exercise Journey** Julie Scroggins, Houston, TX

The thought of exercising with neuropathy can be a daunting idea. For me, the cancer, chemo and resulting neuropathic pain took away my ability to walk and balance, with the pain pills, including gabapentin, ineffective in restoring something positive from my past. My excuse for not exercising was "I can't walk or balance so how can I exercise!" But after being so frustrated with using a rollator everywhere for 4 years, I decided to try.

My physical therapist with a heart said: let's do toe taps while you are seated. Next, add knee lifts. She continued to include foot pumps, heel to toe, and toe to heel. After that, she held my rollator and continued to teach me similar techniques while standing as I stabilized on the rollator. The bottom line is that she pushed forward to have me walking along kitchen counters, forwards, backwards and sideways, all too improve my balance. And it worked. In a couple of months, I started using a cane again, accomplishing a huge gain through routine simple exercises.

My favorite exercise is leaning forward toward a door with arms stretched and feet apart. Just lean into the door and use your arms to push yourself away from the door. It is like a standing push-up, and you can feel it everywhere. As you lean in bending your arms, try to touch your nose to the door. The push back to vertical is invigorating. These small sets of exercises assist your body to wake up and build muscles that allow you to do more.

I still use my rollator when fatigued but having options is a great choice for many of us that have had limited mobility. Best wishes for a better life. Sometimes it's the small things!