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At home exercises for Vertigo (NON-BPPV)

What Is Vertigo?

Vertigo can be defined as a feeling of tilting or spinning, even when you're at rest. This happens when your body's perception of where it is in space is interrupted. There are two types of vertigo: peripheral, which occurs because of inner ear dysfunction, and central, which is caused by a problem with your brain — an infection, stroke, injury, or tumor. Your provider may order testing to determine which type of vertigo you have.

While vertigo can sometimes go away on its own, Cawthorne-Cooksey exercises help you manage your vertigo or balance disorder symptoms.

At Home Vestibular Rehabilitation exercises

If you are unable able to attend Vestibular Rehabilitation with a physical therapist you may be prescribed at home exercises from your provider.

Cawthorne-Cooksey exercises are vestibular training activities used to help those who experience balance disorders such as vertigo. The balance part of each ear works together by sending impulses to the brain necessary for proper balance. When either balance center is damaged, you may experience dizziness.

Cawthorne-Cooksey exercises help build up tolerance. The more frequently they're done, the sooner your symptoms will subside.

Cawthorne's Head Exercises

These exercises are to be carried out for 15 minutes twice a day, increasing to 30 minutes.

1. Eye Exercises:
 1. Look up, then down - at first slowly, then quickly - 20 times
 2. Look from one side to the other - at first slowly, then quickly - 20 times
 3. Focus on finger at arm's length moving one foot closer and back again - 20 times
2. Head Exercises:
 1. Bend head forward then backward with eyes open - slowly, later quickly - 20 times
 2. Turn head from one side to other side - slowly, then quickly - 20 times
 3. As dizziness decreases these exercises should be done with eyes closed.
3. Sitting:
 1. While sitting shrug shoulders - 20 times
 2. Turn shoulders to right, then to left - 20 times
 3. Bend forward and pick up objects from ground and sit up - 20 times
4. Standing:
 1. Change from sitting to standing and back again - 20 times with eyes open

2. Repeat with eyes closed
3. Throw a small rubber ball from hand to hand above eye level.
4. Throw ball from hand to hand under one knee
5. Moving About:
 1. Walk across room with eyes open, then closed - 10 times
 2. Walk up and down a slope with eyes open, then closed - 10 times
 3. Walk up and down steps with eyes open, then closed - 10 times
 4. Any game involving stooping or turning is good

References:

1. Dix MR. The rationale and technique of head exercises in the treatment of vertigo. Acta Otorhinolaryngol Belg. 1979;3(3):370-84.

It is recommended that you follow up with your provider approximately 6 months after starting at home exercises to see if symptoms have resolved or if further testing/treatment is required.