

# Century Ear, Nose and Throat Head and Neck Surgery

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## VESTIBULAR SYSTEM

### Introduction

The vestibular system or “balance center” can be looked upon as several computers that are continually capable of adapting to new problems encountered by the balance system.

The right and left balance centers are partners, working with, not against each other. In your “dizziness” disorder, one partner cannot carry his share of the load, and vertigo is the result. The more the two partners confront each other with the problem they want to solve (disequilibrium), the more quickly it will be solved.

You do not have a life-threatening process, so do not fear your vertigo.

The following exercises are designed to “re-program” the damaged components of the vestibular system. Only you can build the tolerance in your brain to overcome your symptoms. Consider it like building muscle strength. Muscle grows in strength the more it is exercised.

Thus, the more often you seek out the motion that stimulates your “dizziness” and practice it, the more quickly your symptoms will resolve.

### Aims of Exercise

- Loosen muscles of the neck and shoulders.
- Train eye movements independent of the head.
- Practice balancing in everyday situations.
- Practice head movements that cause dizziness.
- Encourage self-confidence.

### Directions for Exercise

1. Exercise must be performed 3-4 times a day for at least 5 minutes.
2. Each time you exercise, always start from the beginning unless rapid repetitions are performed without symptoms.
3. All exercises are started in exaggerated slow time, and gradually progress to more rapid time.
4. Each exercise is to be done 15 times unless otherwise stated.
5. The program is to be stopped, if (1) the problem no longer exists, or (2) if there is no change in the condition after two months of daily exercise.

### Sitting Position

- 1a. Eye Exercises: Move eyes up and down. Move eyes side to side.
- 2a. Head Exercises: Move head up and down. Move head side to side.
- 3a. Shrug shoulders.
- 4a. Bend forward and pick up objects from the ground.
- 5a. Rotate head, shoulders, and trunk with eyes open, then with eyes closed.
- 6a. Lay head and trunk down on the right, left side. Remain until dizziness subsides. Sit up 30 seconds, then repeat.

### Standing Position

- 1b. Repeat number 1a.
- 2b. Repeat number 2a.
- 3b. Repeat number 5a.
- 4b. Change from a sitting position to a standing position with eyes open, then with eyes closed.
- 5b. Throw a ball from hand to hand (above eye level).
- 6b. Change from sitting to standing, and turn around in-between.

### Walking

- 1c. Walk across the room with eyes open, and then with eyes closed.
- 2c. Walk up and down a slope with eyes open, and then with eyes closed.
- 3c. Stand on one foot for 5 seconds with eyes open, and then with eyes closed.
- 4c. Walk across the room with one foot in front of the other with eyes open, and then with eyes closed.
- 5c. Do any games involving stooping or stretching and aiming, such as bowling, shuffleboard, etc.