

Managing Your Dizziness

For most people, dizziness is a temporary or intermittent problem that doesn't require any long term changes to your way of life. However, if you have ongoing dizziness that affects your activities, the following actions can make you much more functional, and often decrease your discomfort and unsteadiness.

Keep active but avoid fatigue:

- Plan your activities and pace yourself.
- Get out of the house at least once a day.

Diet

- Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water per day:
- Watch your diet.
- Limit salt and sugar intake.
- Keep your weight normal.

Discuss all medications with your ENT Doctor:

- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, cigarettes, tranquilizers, narcotics, sleeping pills. These medications will make you more dizzy.
- STOP smoking.

If you have sudden attacks:

- Don't drive.
- Don't swim.

Your safety is most important

- Sit or lie down if you feel dizzy:
- Don't continue what you are doing.
- Discuss driving with your ENT doctor:
- Don't drive if dizzy or taking medications causing this.

Avoid rapid changes in head position and extremes of head motion:

- Turn side to side slowly.
- Get up or down slowly.
- Avoid looking up suddenly.
- Avoid turning very fast or twisting.

Avoid glare

- Wear sunglasses outside in bright sunlight:
- Avoid fluorescent lights

- Replace fluorescent bulbs with broad-spectrum bulbs.

Avoid falls:

- Wear flat or low-heeled shoes with firm soles.
- Don't climb ladders.
- Let your hand glide along a wall or support.
- Touch furniture.
- Hold on to railings.
- Place rubber mats or non-skid strips in your bathtub or shower.
- When showering, hold onto a bar or wall, keep your eyes open at all times and avoid tipping your head back.
- Sit down in the shower if needed.
- Keep a night light on.
- Keep your path to the bathroom clear.
- Use solid soled slippers at night.
- Keep your home clear of obstacles.
- Keep phone and light cords out of the way.
- Keep kids toys and animal dishes out of the way.
- Eliminate all loose rugs, like throw rugs.
- Hold securely to support rails on stairs or escalators:
- Go up and down stairs slowly.
- Use caution when walking on uneven surfaces: go slowly on rocky shorelines, icy roads, gravel, and sand.
- Plan your path on footpaths and parking lots.
- If necessary, get help when walking: use a cane, or take someone's arm for support.

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Vertigo Exercises

The goal of these exercises is to help your body adapt to normal movements without making you dizzy. First we find the most provocative, or “dizzy producing” activity you are able to do safely. Work on that activity until you are safe and not dizzy. Add more activities as you improve.

Include an aerobic exercise program in addition to your specific vestibular exercises. A schedule of twenty minutes three times a week is a good aerobic activity program. Safety during exercise is very important; work with your GP or physiotherapist about safety in exercise. If you experience any back or neck pain, stop exercising and contact your GP or physiotherapist.

If you experience any of the following symptoms, stop exercising and contact your GP or ENT Surgeon:

- Sudden hearing loss or changes in hearing.
- Pressure and ear fullness to the point of discomfort.
- Fluid draining from your ears.
- Severe ringing in your ear/s.
- Any other changes that you are concerned about.

Practice 2-3 exercises for at least 5 minutes every day and you can build up your tolerance to vertigo.

Exercises while in Bed:

1) Eye movements, first slowly and then rapidly:

- Up and down.
- Side to side.
- Focusing on your finger as it moves from 3 feet away to close to your nose.

2) Head Movements: first slowly and then rapidly, initially with eyes open and later with eyes closed:

- Bending forwards and backwards.
- Turning from side to side.

Exercises while Sitting:

- Shoulder shrugging.
- Bending forwards and picking up objects from floor.
- Sitting down and standing up with eyes open and closed.

Exercises while Standing:

- Throwing a small ball from hand to hand.
- Throwing the ball from hand to hand under your knee.
- Sitting down and standing up, then turning around 360 degrees.

Exercises while Moving About:

- Circle around a person who throws a large ball to you.
- Walk across the room first with eyes open and then with eyes closed.
- Walk up and down a slope with eyes open and then with eyes closed.
- Walk up and down stairs with eyes open and eyes closed.
- Any game with bending, stretching and aiming, e.g. Skittles, bowling, and basketball.