



CAWTHORNE HEAD EXERCISES FOR VESTIBULAR WEAKNESS

What is Vestibular Weakness?

Uncompensated vestibulopathy is an “inner ear” abnormality that can be caused by a variety of ear disorders. The exercises described below have been shown to greatly reduce or completely eliminate symptoms relating to inner ear problems from a variety of causes. Provided that your disorder is not chronic, beneficial effects of the exercises will be apparent within a few weeks. Usually 6 months or less is adequate for correcting most problems. Just waiting for your balance to improve is not generally an effective approach. Once the inner ear has been damaged, the effects on balance sometimes never self-correct without such exercises. These exercises are affective because they “retrain” your brain to recognize as “normal” some of the abnormal signals coming from your inner ear due to a past or present inner ear disorder.

How is Vestibular Weakness Treated?

These exercises will help your brain compensate for your vestibular weakness. They should be performed for 15 minutes twice a day increasing to 30 minutes.

1. Eye exercises: Look up, then down, at first slow then quick (20 times). Look from one side to the other, at first slowly then quickly (20 times). Focus on one finger holding your hand at arms length, look at nose, then move it back again (20 times).
2. Head exercises: Bend your head forward then backward slowly with your eyes open, then quickly (20 times). Turn your head from side to side, slowly, then quickly (20 times). As dizziness improves, these head exercises should be done with eyes closed.
3. Sitting While sitting shrug your shoulders (20 times). Turn shoulders to the right then left (20 times). Bend forward and pick up objects from the ground and sit up (20 times).
4. Standing: Change from sitting to standing and back again (20 times with eyes open, 20 times with eyes closed). Throw a small rubber ball from hand to hand above eye level. Throw ball from hand to hand under one knee.
5. Moving about: Walk across a room with eyes open, then closed (10 times). Walk up and down a slope with eyes open, then closed (10 times). Walk up and down steps with eyes open, then closed (10 times). Any game involving stooping or turning is good.

Results should begin to be apparent within about 6 weeks, but it usually takes 2-3 months or more for the exercises to be completely effective. In the beginning, you may experience more dizziness than you normally do. However, this should improve in a few days. Any severe dizziness or other disturbing sensations should be reported to your referring physician. If the exercises are not effective, this should also be reported to your physician.

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