

PATIENT INFORMATION

Eye Exercises to Help Vertigo

(Gaze Stabilisation)

This exercise is designed to work on the balance reflex responsible for stabilising the eyes. This will help to improve the symptoms you feel when you are moving around.

Standing up or sitting down:

Hold a small card with writing on it where you can see it clearly. Fix your eyes on the card as you turn your head left to right a little way. Move your head smoothly and rhythmically.

Continue for 1– 2 minutes.

It is normal to feel a little dizzy. Adjust your speed so the writing is just slipping out of focus, try to work at the limit of your tolerance for the best effect.

Look at the card against different backgrounds e.g. patterned wallpaper, a mirror or a window.

Try the same exercise looking at a different target a couple of metres away or across a room.

To get the best result, do the exercise **3-5** times a day with a variety of targets, distances and backgrounds.

If you feel too dizzy, slow down or use a smaller movement. Work at your own pace, but remember this exercise needs to feel a little challenging to be effective.

You may also be advised to try the exercise moving your head up and down

Advanced Exercises

1. Do the same exercise with vertical stripes in the background – use a sheet of wrapping paper stuck to a door – bold stripes are best.
2. Hold the card in your hand and move it in the opposite direction to your head as you do the exercise.
3. Try the same exercise as you are walking, i.e. look at a target across the room and turn your head side to side as you walk towards the target.

It will take at least 6-8 weeks of doing these exercises before you start to notice an improvement and you may feel worse before you feel better. The exercises will not be effective unless you complete them regularly.

You can speed up recovery by making yourself feel dizzy by moving your head with everyday activity. This might be when hanging out washing or unloading the dishwasher.

Keeping active is important, try to take a walk each day and increase the distance as you feel better. Exercise such as pilates or swimming are very effective at improving balance.

A video of these exercises is available, please follow this link:

<http://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/vertigo>

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