

There may be students and observers present during your consultation as part of their ongoing training. Please let the staff know if you do not wish any students to be present during your attendance.

Please ask a member of staff if you would like a chaperone.

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Vestibular and balance system exercises

Patient leaflet

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format
please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید،
لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formacie,
proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil,
vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe
de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتسبيق
يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

Why do balance and walking exercises?

Balance and walking exercises will challenge your balance and vestibular system. This system detects the position and movement of our heads in space. By challenging this system repetitively through exercises, you can improve your balance which will improve your symptoms eg imbalance, veering when walking, dizziness, visual vertigo and more.

Your physiotherapist is highly trained and a specialist in vestibular and balance disorders. They will carry out thorough assessments and after that, you will be prescribed the appropriate exercises for you. It will be up to you to do these exercises at home as advised and this will help you take an active part in improving your symptoms and quality of life.

It is your responsibility to complete prescribed exercises. Maintaining an active vestibular system should be part of your everyday routine.

Notes

Functional balance training

Continue to challenge your balance system and it will continue to improve. If you do not practice, it will not stay the same or get better and your balance may get worse. Always make an effort to challenge your balance in a safe way. This might mean standing in a doorway to balance, or using walking poles when out walking. If you are unsure how to make exercise safe, please discuss it with your physiotherapist.

Try to walk every day, for 30 minutes with moderate effort. Change your route and try to go into busier places gradually. If you cannot do 30 minutes to start with, start with 5 or 10 minutes and build up each week by 5 minutes to 30–60 minutes. You should feel your heart rate increase, get a little sweaty and slightly short of breath, but still be able to hold a conversation.

This is a normal response to exercise. To get the most benefit from your daily walk here are a few handy tips.

- Try not to hold onto anyone when you are out walking but use a walking aid if you need to.
- Look around and target your vision, to pick out details on things near and far away. For example, the pattern on leaves and flowers, or try to pick out everything that is red on your route.
- Notice the beauty in things around you, appreciate and recognise the good things you see in places and people.
- Try to walk in daylight. This will help with your vitamin D levels and sleep pattern.
- Do not exceed more than 6 out of 10 discomfort with symptoms or dizziness and do not trigger headaches with any of the exercises.

It is important to make sure you are safe whilst performing exercises. You may need to lightly hold on to the sink, or do them in a room corner for example. Try to hold each posture for 10-30 seconds.

- Stand with your feet together.
- Stand heel to toe, left in front of right, and then swap over.
- Try to stand on your right leg alone, and then repeat on the left. Aim to get both sides equal.
- Practise standing on your heels, then tiptoe. This helps prepare you for uneven ground and direction change.

When these are easy, it is important you continue improving or maintaining your balance by moving on to a harder exercise.

- Move your head left and right targeting your vision at each side. Progress to do this in walking.
- Turn your head left and right whilst looking straight ahead slowly at first then faster. Progress to do this in walking.
- Move your head up and down. Progress to do this in walking.
- Move your head up and down whilst still looking straight ahead. Progress to do this in walking.
- Close your eyes while standing still in a safe place.
- Stand on a cushion in a safe place.
- Close your eyes and move your head right to left or up and down.

General fitness and strength exercises

Do each exercise below for 30 seconds with a 30 seconds rest in between and continue for 6, 12 or 18 minutes:

- Mini squats.
- Rest.
- Walking or jogging on the spot.
- Rest.
- Lunges.
- Rest.
- Sit to stand.
- Rest.
- Step on/off block or stairs or forward and backward stepping.
- Rest.
- Sidestepping.

Number	Exercise	Frequency/ reps
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

If you cannot do these exercises with your feet together or one in front of the other you can start with your feet shoulder width apart . Progress by moving them inwards a little each week before moving one foot in front of the other.

Motion sensitivity training

- In standing hold your thumbs at shoulder height and look at them. Rotate your whole body 120 degrees right and left looking at your thumbs.
- Progress by increasing to 180 degree or 360 degree turns to the right or left and repeat 3-5 times.
- Any movement triggering momentary dizziness can be repeated 3-5 times safely.

- Stand on a cushion and move your head, targeting your vision. If this is too easy close your eyes, etc.
- Try and do a mental task at the same time e.g. read or count backwards.

If these are becoming easy, try to progress by challenging yourself further but only if you feel safe.

- Throw and catch balls.
- Walk forwards, backwards and sideways whilst turning your head.
- Put your arms out to the side and turn your head right and left to target thumbs. You can progress to do this when walking.
- Practise turning around, first in a big circle, gradually making smaller circles, until you can turn on the spot.
- Push yourself to try any sport you used to enjoy, Thai Chi, Badminton or dancing etc.
- Gently bounce up and down sitting on the side of your bed.

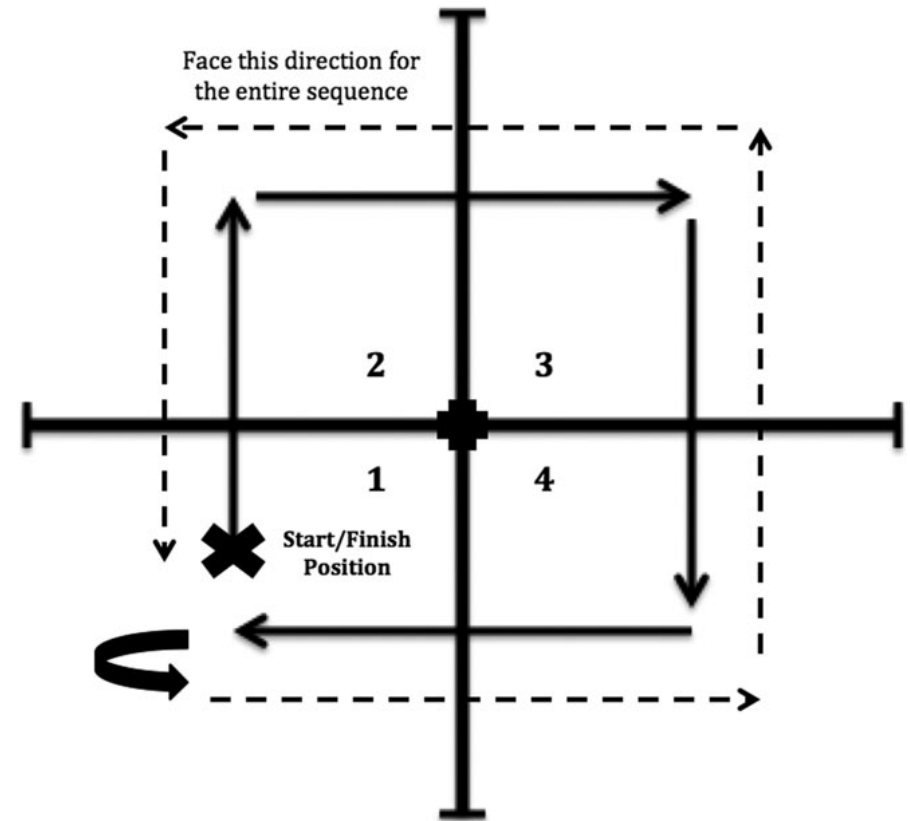
Specific vestibular and balance training

Any movement can be exercise. Specific movements or activities that trigger imbalance or dizziness can be used to improve symptoms.

- Be safe.
- Repeat the trigger movement gently at first, with low repetitions.
- Challenge your balance system, by increasing the speed and repetitions gradually.
- Discuss the trigger movement with your physiotherapist if you would like further advice on how to do this.

Training the vestibular, vision and sensory system

Exercises should be challenging and may make you moderately dizzy, but this should settle in under 3 minutes. The amount you do will depend on how bad your symptoms are, how easily they are triggered, your diagnosis and level of balance.



Sensory balance exercises

1. Stand with your feet together and your eyes closed.
2. Without using your hands (if you can), stand up and sit down repeatedly with your eyes closed.
3. Tandem stance (heel to toe standing) for as long as you can.
4. Heel toe walking without head turns, then doing it with head turns.
5. Stand on one leg with or without your eyes closed – be safe and alternate legs after 30 seconds.
6. Stand with feet together and eyes closed with or without head turns.
7. Turn to look backwards right and left.
8. In the 4 square step exercise try to stay facing forward and do not touch the lines as you step from square to square. Both feet must stand in each position before stepping to the next position. Go clockwise then anticlockwise and repeat for 1 minute.

Vestibular Ocular Reflex (VOR) training

VOR training can help improve your balance and reduce dizziness.

VOR x1

When sitting, standing or walking, hold a pen top at arms length and at eye level. You can also stand 3 metres, 2 meters or 1 meter away from a target at arm's length.

The target should stay in focus during head movements.

1. Fix your eyes on the target, then turn your head quite quickly (2 head turns per second) left to right without moving your shoulders.
2. Fix your eyes on the target, then move your head at 2 head turns per second, up and down.
3. You may wish to use a metronome or metronome app, to help you keep the right speed 160-240 bpm.

Top tip

If you can keep the visual target in focus easily, increase the speed movement. However, if the visual target blurs, slow the movement down a little.

VOR x2

To progress from VOR x1.

1. Move the pen in the opposite direction to your head. These are small movements no bigger than the length of a 20cm ruler.
2. Do VOR x1 or x2 in a step standing position or walking.

Cervical spine sensory awareness exercises

1. Stand with your feet together, eyes closed and your arms out to the side with your thumbs up.
2. Move your head from side to side and occasionally stop to point nose to thumbs – check by opening eyes.
3. Vary the position of your thumbs or choose objects around the room to line up with.

Saccades

1. Sit in a comfortable position; hold a playing card (King or Queen) in each hand, level with your eyes and about 18 inches apart.
2. Keep your head still, move your eyes quickly from one card to the other without stopping in between the cards. Remember to move only your eyes.
3. As you improve, try to focus on smaller and smaller detail of the face on the card e.g. the nose, eyes or mouth.

Corrective saccades

1. Hold your thumbs out at arm's length in front and slightly to the side.
2. Move your eyes only to look at your right thumb.
3. Turn your head to face your right thumb.
4. Move your eyes only to look at your left thumb.
5. Turn your head to face your left thumb.
6. Move your eyes only to look at your right thumb.
7. Turn your head to face your right thumb.

Repeat as many times as you can, as you need to be consistent over time to improve. Practice makes perfect.