

Balance Rehabilitation Exercises

Why have I been given these exercises?

You have been given these exercises because performing certain movements can make you feel dizzy / unbalanced. Balance rehabilitation exercises are designed to strengthen your balance system and ease your symptoms.

How do they work?

You may feel dizzy because your balance system is receiving mismatched signals. These exercises are designed to help your balance system “re-learn” these signals. Practising movements that bring on symptoms will strengthen the system over time. As your balance system becomes stronger, your symptoms of dizziness / imbalance will reduce.

How often should I do them?

Every day. The more you practise the faster you will see an improvement. Avoiding movements that can make you dizzy / unbalanced will not help and will prolong your recovery. However, doing too many exercises in one day can be counterproductive too. It is important to read the information given carefully.

How should I do them?

Full guidance is given at the end of each exercise sheet, but the key is little and often. We advise 3 minutes of exercise, no more than three times per day, concentrating on one exercise at a time. It is important to perform the exercises in a safe environment initially. The person leading your appointment will also give you advice during the session.

How will they make me feel?

Until recovery occurs, it is normal for the exercises to make you feel a little dizzy. Try and persevere with them despite this. Over time, your symptoms will ease as your balance system becomes strengthened. If the exercises make you feel very dizzy or unwell then stop and take a break.

When will I start to see an improvement?

Many factors affect balance and everyone’s balance system is different so there is no set time pattern to recovery. The exercises require perseverance as it can take weeks/months of daily use before benefit is seen. The more active you are during this time the better.

Contact details

- Audiology Department Reception – 0191 569 9001
- Email – sunderland.audiology@chsft.nhs.uk

Basic Balance Exercises

All exercises should be performed sitting down unless otherwise stated

Exercise	Tick when able to perform without any symptoms	Date
Move eyes up and down, then move eyes side to side		
Focus on your finger and move it from arm's length to 30 cm from your face and back again		
Bend head forwards, then backwards with eyes open		
Twist head from side to side with eyes open		
Tilt head on each side with eyes open		
Bend head forwards, then backwards with eyes closed		
Twist head from side to side with eyes closed		
Tilt head on each side with eyes closed		

- Work on the exercises one at a time
- Only begin a new exercise if you can perform the previous one without bringing on any of your symptoms
- Each exercise is most effective if you are able to perform each one for at least a minute at a time. (You may find that you are not able to do each one for this long to begin with, but aim to work up to this)
- Work to the limit of your ability, easy exercises will not help you to progress.
- The exercises are designed to challenge you and your balance system

1. Perform one exercise repeatedly for one minute
2. Rest for one minute
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 until you have done 3 minutes of exercise, 3 minutes of rest
4. Repeat the whole process 3 times per day

- Once you feel comfortable performing these exercises indoors in a safe environment, try them outside in everyday situations
- If you are aware of other movements that are difficult for you, practise those too

Intermediate Balance Exercises

All exercises should be performed sitting down unless otherwise stated

Exercise	Tick when able to perform without any symptoms	Date
Shrug shoulders, then relax		
Bend forwards and pick up a small object (e.g. tennis ball) from the ground. Straighten up, then bend down to replace it on the ground		
Throw a small ball from hand to hand, keeping your eyes on it all of the time		
Stand up, then sit down		
Stand up, turn around then sit down		

- Work on the exercises one at a time
- Only begin a new exercise if you can perform the previous one without bringing on any of your symptoms
- Each exercise is most effective if you are able to perform each one for at least a minute at a time. (You may find that you are not able to do each one for this long to begin with, but aim to work up to this)
- Work to the limit of your ability, easy exercises will not help you to progress.
- The exercises are designed to challenge you and your balance system

1. Perform one exercise repeatedly for one minute
2. Rest for one minute
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 until you have done 3 minutes of exercise, 3 minutes of rest
4. Repeat the whole process 3 times per day

- Once you feel comfortable performing these exercises indoors, try them outside in everyday situations
- If you are aware of other movements that are difficult for you, practise those too

Advanced Balance Exercises

Exercise	Tick when able to perform without any symptoms	Date
Walk across room with eyes open		
Walk across room with eyes closed		
Walk up and down 5 stairs with eyes open		
Walk up and down 5 stairs with eyes closed		
Stand on one foot and trace the letters of the alphabet on the ground with the other foot		
Walk across the room, moving your head from side to side, up and down		
Walk around in large circles, then in smaller circles, clockwise and anticlockwise		
Walk around in circles moving head from side to side, up and down		

- Work on the exercises one at a time
- Only begin a new exercise if you can perform the previous one without bringing on any of your symptoms
- Each exercise is most effective if you are able to perform each one for at least a minute at a time. (You may find that you are not able to do each one for this long to begin with, but aim to work up to this)
- Work to the limit of your ability, easy exercises will not help you to progress.
- The exercises are designed to challenge you and your balance system

1. Perform one exercise repeatedly for one minute
2. Rest for one minute
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 until you have done 3 minutes of exercise, 3 minutes of rest
4. Repeat the whole process 3 times per day

This information was correct at the time of printing. Whilst the Trust makes every reasonable effort to keep its information leaflets up to date, very recent changes may not yet be reflected in the guidance and you should discuss this with the Audiologist at the time of your appointment.

Date of publication: July 2011
Date of review: July 2014
Date of CGSG: August 2011
Reference: 457/11
© City Hospitals Sunderland