

Patient Information

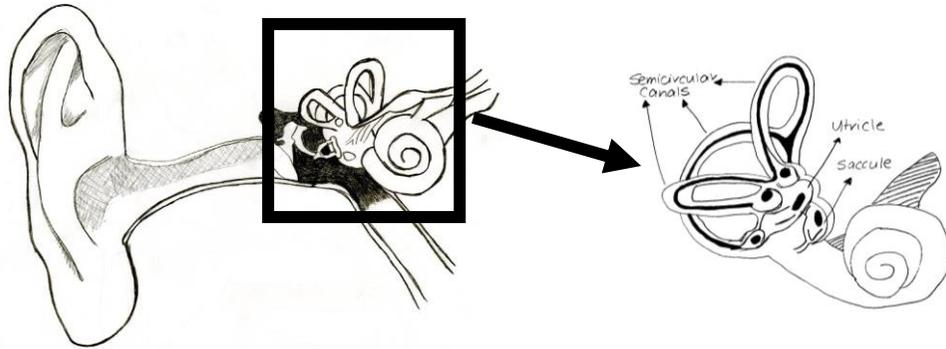
Vestibular Rehabilitation Programme

Audiology Department
Hinchingsbrooke Hospital
Hinchingsbrooke Park
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE29 6NT

Telephone: 01480 847465
Email: hch-tr.audiology@nhs.net

www.hinchingsbrooke.nhs.uk/page/our-services/audiology

What is the vestibular system?



Your vestibular organs are located in each of the inner ears and make up your balance system. They consist of three semicircular canals and two gravity-sensing otolith organs: the utricle and the saccule. Tiny receptor cells in these structures send information about head rotation, gravity and linear movement to the balance centres of the brain for processing.

About your imbalance, dizziness and vertigo

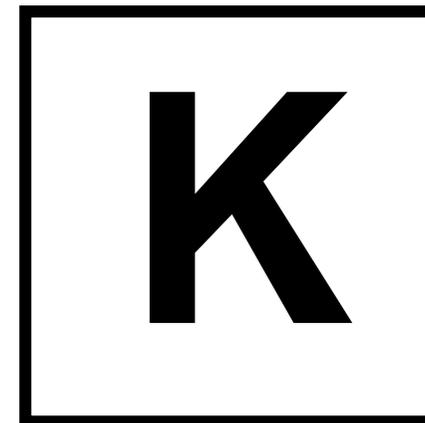
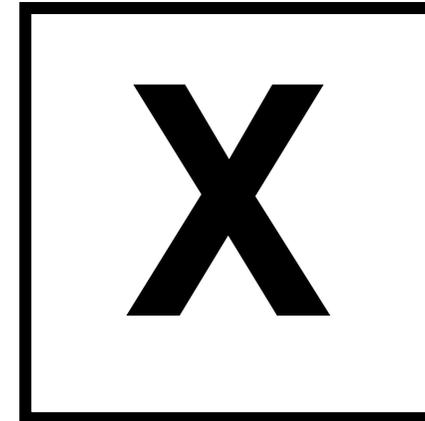
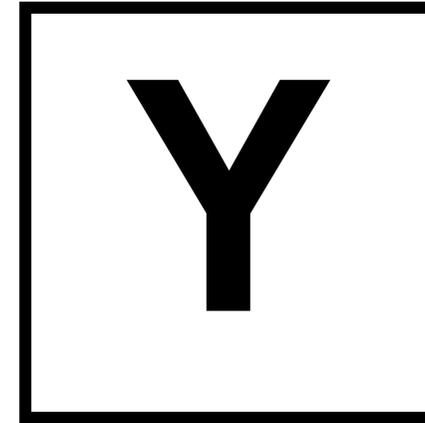
In order to maintain balance, our brain uses information from three inputs:

1. Our ears (vestibular system)
2. Our eyes
3. Position sensors in our legs and feet

If any of these systems is not working well we can feel dizzy, off-balance or disorientated. In addition, if one of the vestibular organs is working better than the other, this can also cause these symptoms.

Dizziness varies from person to person. Sometimes it can feel like a spinning sensation, a falling sensation, light-headedness or more of an unsteady/off-balance feeling.

(Cut out to use with appropriate exercises)



This Information leaflet has been reviewed and approved by the Audiology Patient Panel. If you would like to get involved, please leave your contact details with a member of the reception staff.



If you require this leaflet in another format for example LARGE PRINT, Audio format or another language, please ask your audiologist, a member of reception, or contact the department

This Information leaflet has been reviewed and approved by the Audiology Patient Panel. If you would like to get involved, please leave your contact details with a member of the reception staff.

Document History

Authors: Audiology Department

Department: Audiology Department, Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, Hinchingsbrooke Park, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE29 6NT

www.hinchingsbrooke.nhs.uk/page/our-services/audiology

Contact number: 01480 847465

Publish/Review date: April 2015/April 2020



This leaflet is printed on recycled paper.

What is vestibular rehabilitation & why does it help?

If changes occur within your vestibular system, moving your head or body may make you feel dizzy or imbalanced. This is because your brain is receiving mixed messages and is struggling to make sense of them. In order to reduce this feeling, the brain needs to be encouraged to adapt to the changes and learn to make sense of the new information it is receiving.

The goal of vestibular rehabilitation is to encourage your brain to adapt via a customised exercise regime.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about this leaflet or your vestibular rehabilitation programme, please contact the Audiology Department as follows:

Address: Hinchingsbrooke Hospital
Hinchingsbrooke Park
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire, PE29 6NT

Phone: 01480 847 465

Example of an exercise

Move your head up and down, keeping your eyes focused on a target (e.g. a letter K) held steadily in front of you. Three targets at the back of this booklet are available for you to cut out and use.



Will the exercises work for me?

Most people who are committed to their exercise programme see improvement in their symptoms.

You should be aware that some people do not see improvements and may need a different type of intervention.

How quickly will I see results?

Some changes in symptoms may be noticeable after approximately six weeks of consistently performing the exercises. More significant improvements generally occur over a period of around six months.

It is common for your dizziness to feel worse when first starting the exercises, but this is normal. The symptoms should reduce as you continue with your rehabilitation programme.

General exercise

Completing some form of daily exercise will also be beneficial in speeding up your recovery. A walk every day, and participation in activities such as tai chi or yoga can be helpful.

It is normal for your symptoms to get worse when you first start rehabilitation. You have probably been modifying your movements to stop yourself from feeling dizzy. This has also been stopping you from getting better. The sooner you recover normal movement, the sooner you will feel better.

Tips

- You might find it helpful to video yourself doing your exercises to ensure you are doing them correctly. In particular, make sure you are not slowing down or restricting your head movements.
- Make sure you do your exercises in a safe place. Standing exercises can be undertaken in a corner for support. Walking exercises can be undertaken in a hallway or along a wall.
- Maintaining a healthy level of daily activity will aid your recovery. Work within your limits. Don't push yourself too hard. Gentle, daily, varied exercise is very beneficial.
- Apply a graded approach to your daily life. Take small steps to build your confidence before trying anything more challenging.
- Avoid 'boom and bust' cycles of activity. Try to maintain an even keel rather than do too much and then have to go to bed to recover. Pace yourself.
- Be very patient with yourself during your recovery. It may take time but remind yourself of how far you have already come and imagine gradually climbing a staircase one step at a time towards your goals.



Anxiety / Panic

It is very common for people with balance problems and dizziness to also have feelings of anxiety and panic. This is understandable given the effect that your symptoms may be having on your daily life but there are ways to help.

You may benefit from more information around the impact of anxiety on your symptoms. If you would like to learn more, speak with your audiologist who can provide you with information.

Relaxation

It is very important to maintain a healthy life balance during your recovery. Make sure you schedule time for relaxing and enjoyable activities, as well as your exercises and daily life tasks.

Make time for relaxation. This might mean reading a book, listening to music, watching a movie or enjoying your hobby of choice. Making sure you schedule some 'down time' will keep your spirits up and ensure you have the motivation to progress with your rehabilitation.

You might be interested in more formal relaxation techniques such as meditation, controlled breathing and progressive muscle relaxation. If you would like more information about these techniques, speak with your audiologist.



Dizziness medication

Medications prescribed to relieve your dizzy symptoms (eg: Stemetil / Sturgeron / Cinnarizine) can stop your brain from adapting and limit your rehabilitation.

You may be advised to stop taking this medication. For more information, ask your audiologist or referring physician.

Balance Pad

If your audiologist has recommended that you perform some exercises whilst standing on a foam pad, these can be purchased easily online. A Balance Pad, similar to the one you used in clinic, is available on Amazon.



Alternatively, you can use upholstery foam or your sofa seat pads. Make sure that they are as dense as the pad you used in clinic, otherwise your exercises will be too easy as you will be able to feel the ground under your feet.

Rating Scale

You will be given a set of exercises to complete daily. The exercises are designed to make you feel mildly symptomatic. If they do not make you feel symptomatic they won't work, but it is important that the feelings are not so strong that they are unmanageable. Your audiologist will tailor your exercise programme to suit you using the scale below:

- 0 = No difficulty
- 1 = Very Mild
- 2 = Mild**
- 3 = Mild-Moderate**
- 4 = Moderate
- 5 = Severe

A rating of 2-3 is a good starting point for initial exercises.

How many times a day should I do the exercises?

It is recommended to perform the exercises several times per day. Your audiologist will advise you, but three times per day is a good guide.

Consistency is important; try to complete the exercises the same number of times each day. It may help to do the exercises at the same times each day (eg: 10am, 1pm & 4pm). Try to avoid first thing in the morning when you are waking up or last thing at night when you are getting sleepy.

How can I make the exercises harder?

As time progresses, you should find that the exercises start to become easier. You may, therefore, find that an exercise that began as a 2 or a 3 becomes a 0 or a 1. If this exercise remains as a 0 or a 1 for three consecutive days, you should start to make it more difficult.

You can do this by either:

1. Increasing the number of repetitions; or
2. Increasing the level at which you complete the exercise (eg: if you previously did the exercise sitting down, try standing up with your feet shoulder width apart. If you previously had your feet apart, try putting them together)

It is important when increasing the repetitions, or difficulty level that you keep to a rating of a 2 or 3. If you increase the repetitions/level too much and the difficulty changes to a rating of 4 or 5 then reduce it a little to keep it within the 2-3 range on the difficulty scale.

When you are scoring a 0 or a 1 consistently for this new exercise, you should again increase the difficulty

Support and Resources for Dizziness/ Imbalance

NHS Direct:

Website: www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
Telephone: 0845 4647

NHS Evidence – ENT and audiology

Up-to-date evidence and research.
Website: <http://www.library.nhs.uk/ent>

Chicago Dizziness and Hearing

Provides information about a variety of disorders.
Website: <http://www.dizziness-and-balance.com>

VEDA (Vestibular Disorders Association, America)

Provides diagnosis and treatment information.
Website: www.vestibular.org

The Meniere's Society:

The Ménière's Society provides support and information to those affected by vestibular disorders and funds vital research into all aspects of these conditions.
Website: <http://www.menieres.org.uk/>