



North West Anglia
NHS Foundation Trust

Patient Information

Managing Chronic Dizziness and Imbalance

Pacing Yourself

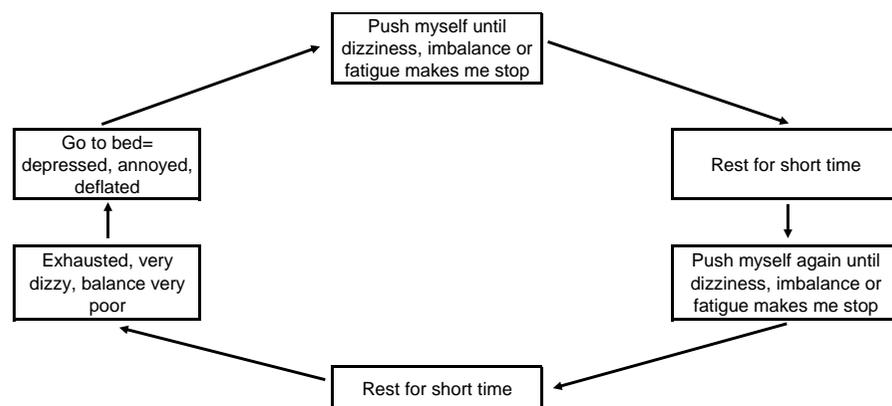
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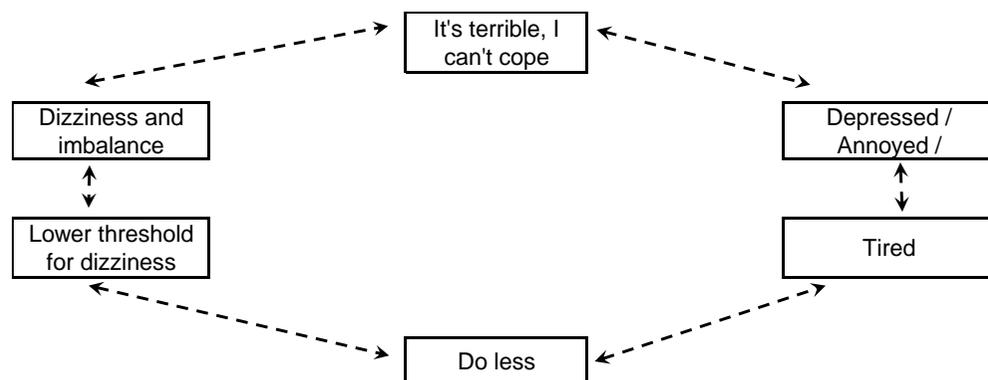
Managing Chronic Dizziness and Imbalance

Because of chronic and persistent dizziness and imbalance, it is easy to get into habits of activity and rest that may not be the best way to deal with them. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) can help to identify those unhelpful ways of thinking and acting, and help us make healthy and positive changes, and therefore reduce the dizziness and imbalance and their impact on your life.



Breaking this simplistic vicious cycle means stopping before the dizziness and imbalance makes you stop - and scheduling in some rest periods.

Thoughts and physiological factors also play a significant part in the cycle:



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

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Document History

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PACE

When considering what you're going to do each day, PACE yourself – keep a healthy balance of activities which include work, rest and play.

P lay	Fun activities which give you a sense of enjoyment. These can include solo activities, and those with family or friends
A chieve	Purposeful activities which give you a sense of achievement or worthwhile-ness. Examples: work, helping others, providing a service, DIY, gardening
C are	Be kind to yourself. Ensure you set time aside and schedule in periods of rest and relaxation. Make healthy changes to your diet and sleep routine. Don't beat yourself up if you miss a target – get back on track by focusing on your next activity.
E nergy	Doing any activity will help to motivate and energise you. Do something in spite of how you're feeling! It will improve your mood if you're feeling depressed, and helps use up the energy created by the adrenaline response if you're feeling stressed, anxious or angry.

PLAN

P repare	Decide what you are going to do, when, how, who with. Set time aside each day, perhaps in the evening, to plan the next day. Be realistic in what you hope to achieve – don't aim too high.
L ist	Prioritise what would be the most important, most urgent, most helpful, most effective thing to do. Write it down
A ction	Do it! And do it regardless of, or in spite of, how you think or feel.
N otice	Notice how the activity affects you. If it was unhelpful, then ask yourself if you could have done anything differently, or maybe decide not to do it again. If it has a helpful or positive effect, then plan to do more. What else could you do?

Factors that cause dizziness and imbalance to have more of an impact on your life:

- **Doing too much too soon**
- **Resting too much for too long**
 - The longer you rest, the more symptoms you will have later
 - Prolonged rest makes it more difficult to get active again and increases fatigue
 - Prolonged rest affects the heart and lungs, nervous system and muscles
- **Boom and bust**
 - Doing too much when you have some energy makes you feel more tired and experience more symptoms and then you will have to rest for longer
- **Disturbed sleep**
 - Due to medical condition
 - Due to worry and stress
- **Thinking about your symptoms**
 - Worrying about dizziness and imbalance tends to make them more prominent in our attention, resulting in experiencing more dizziness and imbalance
 - Worrying that the symptoms may be a sign of getting worse, or after an activity, we might worry that we are harming ourselves by doing what we are doing
- **Life stress and low mood**
 - Financial difficulties- due to not being able to work or having to work less
 - Worry about not being able to do what needs to be done
 - Feelings of guilt- not doing what we think we should be doing, thinking we are letting others down
- **Mental fatigue**
 - Difficulty concentrating, poor comprehension
 - Poor short term memory, difficulty retaining new information
 - Forgetting how to do things

Things to **DO** differently

- **Monitoring**
 - Use an 'Activity and Rest Diary' to make note of times when your symptoms are very bad and when they are good
 - Are there any patterns?
 - Are there certain times of day when your symptoms are worse?
 - Are there certain activities that cause your symptoms to be better or worse?
 - Notice the times when pacing yourself may have helped.
- **Pace yourself**
 - Plan to do certain activities at certain times of the day based on your monitoring information
 - Do activities that cause more symptoms for less time
 - Stop before your body makes you stop
- **Schedule rest and relaxation, fun and enjoyment, achievement**
 - Schedule in rest periods and fun activities that you enjoy
 - Make time for relaxation
 - Reward yourself when you are doing well
- **Increase levels of general physical exercise**
 - Gentle walking is a good place to start
 - Start small and build up
 - Speak to your GP if you need guidance on what is safe for you
- **Set achievable, realistic goals**
 - Start with small steps
 - Pace yourself!
 - Be specific

Ways to **THINK** differently

- **STOP!** Pause, take a breath.



- **Ask yourself:**
 - What is going through my mind now?
 - What meaning am I giving this?
 - How can I make sense of it all?
 - What am I reacting to?
 - Am I getting things out of proportion?
 - Am I comparing my current situation to how things used to be?
 - Am I expecting something that is unrealistic?
 - What is the worst thing that could happen? What is the most likely thing to happen?
 - Am I looking through my gloomy specs?
 - How important is this really?
 - What advice would I give to someone else in this situation?
 - Am I spending time worried about the future or dwelling on the past? What could I do right now to help me feel better?
 - Is there another way of looking at this?
 - What would be the consequences of doing what I normally do?