

Physiotherapy: Vestibular Rehabilitation Exercises

Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Community & Therapy Services

This leaflet has been designed to explain the benefits of the treatment activity you have been taught, act as a reminder of technique and who to contact with any questions.

The information in this leaflet is reproduced with permission from the Brain and Spire Foundation.



Information for patients and visitors

Introduction

You have recently been seen by the Physiotherapist and taught techniques to help manage your condition. This leaflet is designed to remind you of the correct technique and any personalised advice given during the session.

Cawthorne-Cooksey Exercises

The aims of the Cawthorne-Cooksey exercises include relaxing the neck and shoulder muscles, training the eyes to move independently of the head, practising good balance in everyday situations, practising the head movements that cause dizziness (to help the development of vestibular compensation), improving general co-ordination, and encouraging natural unprompted movement.

You should be assessed for an individual exercise programme to ensure you are doing the appropriate exercises. You could ask if it is possible for a friend or relative to accompany you at the assessment. It can be helpful if someone else learns the exercises and helps you with them.

You will be given guidance on how many repetitions of each exercise to do and when to progress to the next set of exercises. As a general rule, you should build up gradually from one set of exercises to the next. You might find that your dizziness problems get worse for a few days after you start the exercises, but you should persevere with them.

In order to pace your exercises so you do not move onto exercises that are too difficult before you are ready, you may also like to utilise a 'number rating scale'. For example, '0' through to '5', for severity of your symptoms – '0' being no symptoms and '5' being severe symptoms. You would then

only move on to the next exercise once your current exercise evokes a '0' on the scale, for 3 days in a row. Please be aware that it may take a few days for you to get used to the exercises. It may be advised not to undertake exercises that you would rate a 3-5 on the scale.

Make sure that you are in a safe environment before you start any of the exercises to reduce the risk of injury. It is also important to note that you may experience dizziness whilst doing these exercises and this is completely normal.

The exercises include the following:

1. In bed or sitting:

A. Eye movements (move eyes slowly at first, then quickly)

Up and down

From side to side

Focusing on finger moving from three feet to one foot away from face

B. Head movements (move head slowly at first, then quickly; with eyes open, then closed)

Bending forwards and backwards

Turning from side to side

2. Sitting:

A. Eye and head movements, as per 1

B. Shrug and circle shoulders

C. Bend forward and pick up objects from the ground

D. Bend side to side and pick up objects from the ground

Information for patients and visitors

3. Standing:

- A. Eye, head and shoulder movements, as per 1 and 2
- B. Change from a sitting to a standing position with eyes open, then closed (please note this is not advised for the elderly with postural hypertension)
- C. Throw a ball from hand to hand above eye level
- D. Throw a ball from hand to hand under the knees
- E. Change from a sitting to a standing position, turning around in between

4. Moving about:

- A. Walk across the room with eyes open
- B. Walk up and down a slope with eyes open
- C. Walk up and down steps with eyes open
- D. Throw and catch a ball
- E. Any game involving stooping, stretching and aiming (for example, bowls or bowling)

Gaze Stabilization Exercises

The aim of gaze stabilization exercises is to improve vision and the ability to focus on a stationary object while the head is moving.

Your therapist should assess you and say which exercises are suitable for you.

1. **Look straight ahead** and focus on an object at eye level in front of you
2. **Move your head from side to side**, staying focused on the target letter.

Build up the speed of your head movement. It is crucial that the letter stays in focus. If you get too dizzy, slow down

3. **Try to continue for up to one minute** (the brain needs this time in order to adapt). Build up gradually to repeat three to five times a day

You can also do this exercise with an up and down (nodding) movement.

Progressions with this exercise can include placing the target letter on a busy background and changing the position of your feet. You should start the exercise whilst seated and then move on to standing with an altered feet position. The number rating scale may be useful for this exercise.

Brandt-Daroff Exercises

Brandt-Daroff exercises are a treatment for Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV) that can be performed at home without the supervision of a specialist. These exercises do not reposition the particles, but disperse them and help your brain to get used to the vertigo symptoms with repeated head movements.

1. Sit on the edge of the bed and turn your head 45 degrees to one side
2. Quickly lie down on your opposite side (that is, to the left if you turned your head to the right, and vice versa) so that the back of your head behind your ear touches the bed
3. Hold this position for about 30 seconds or until the dizziness symptoms stop.
4. Return to the sitting position

Repeat on the other side, alternating until you have completed six repetitions on each side.

Information for patients and visitors

References

None.

Contact Details for Further Information

Musculoskeletal Team, Physiotherapy
Department, Diana Princess of Wales
Hospital

01472 875276

Musculoskeletal Team, Physiotherapy
Department, Scunthorpe General Hospital

01724 290010

Concerns and Queries

If you have any concerns / queries about any of the services offered by the Trust, in the first instance, please speak to the person providing your care.

For Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital

Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01472) 875403 or at the PALS office which is situated near the main entrance.

For Scunthorpe General Hospital

Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01724) 290132 or at the PALS office which is situated on C Floor.

Alternatively you can email:

nlq-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust

Diana Princess of Wales Hospital
Scarcho Road
Grimsby
DN33 2BA
01472 874111

Scunthorpe General Hospital
Cliff Gardens
Scunthorpe
DN15 7BH
01724 282282

Goole & District Hospital
Woodland Avenue
Goole
DN14 6RX
01405 720720

www.nlg.nhs.uk

Date of issue: March, 2017

Review Period: December, 2019

Author: Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy

IFP-929 v1.1

© NLGFT 2017

