

Vestibular Therapy for Concussion

What does your vestibular system do?

The vestibular system includes the parts of the inner ear and brain that help to control balance and eye movements. Your body uses your eyes, inner ears, and feedback from your feet, legs and trunk to help you balance and see things clearly while your head is moving. This system also helps you move around without feeling dizzy or off-balance.

How does a concussion affect my vestibular system?

Concussion can disrupt how the vestibular system works. It can create symptoms that make it hard to focus your eyes, read, study, walk straight, and may even make you tired.

What are some vestibular symptoms after concussion?

- dizziness
- headache
- balance problems
- sensitivity to light and noise
- pressure in head
- blurred vision
- “feeling like in a fog”

How does vestibular therapy help?

After your therapist evaluates you, they will teach you exercises to do during therapy visits and at home to decrease or get rid of your dizziness, balance or vision symptoms. To recover in the shortest amount of time, it is important for you to do your exercises as they are written, and go to all of your therapy sessions. This will allow your therapist to monitor improvements, make

changes to your exercises, and communicate with your doctor about your progress.

What if I feel like these exercises are making my symptoms worse?

If you do your exercises correctly, you should feel a mild to moderate increase in dizziness and other symptoms for only a few minutes. Your brief increase in symptoms in the short-term is what helps your brain make permanent changes to decrease dizziness and other symptoms.

What if I do not feel an increase in dizziness?

You may be doing your exercises too slowly. Increase your speed a small amount until you feel mild to moderate dizziness. Do not overwork yourself. If you become nauseous, or if your symptoms do not decrease to their pre-exercise level within 15-20 minutes, you may be doing them too quickly. Tell your therapist so they can make changes. Also, if you feel off-balance after doing an exercise, sit down and take a break so that you don't fall.

When will I see improvement?

You should notice less dizziness and other symptoms as soon as 1-10 days. It may take longer depending on the severity of your symptoms and how regularly you are doing your exercises. If you feel your dizziness or other symptoms are getting worse or not changing after two weeks, contact your therapist and doctor.

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