

# Vestibular rehabilitation exercises



## **Remember...**

It is normal for these exercises to cause the feelings you are trying to avoid. This is vital for the success of the programme, and should not put you off. If an exercise is not causing these feelings, move on to more active exercises.

Along with these exercises, gradually increase your daily activities. Include a daily walk as your symptoms decrease.

At first, you may not be able to complete the number of repetitions for each exercise. Slowly build up these repetitions over days or weeks until you reach the target number of repetitions.

## **Instructions**

### **Do...**

- plan to spend about 20-30 minutes each session, and allow for a rest period afterwards
- your exercises in a safe, comfortable, and relaxed environment
- ask a family member or friend to act as a coach, if possible
- wear either a low heel or no shoes for the standing exercises.

### **Don't...**

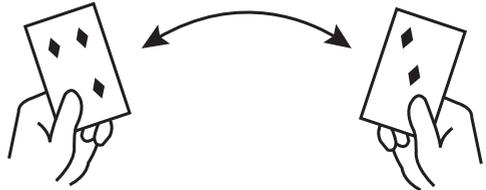
- rush your exercise session. If you don't have time because you are running late, do your exercises later
- do the exercises if you feel ill with another medical condition, such as a bad cold or headache.

## Exercises

### Saccades (Rapid eye movements)

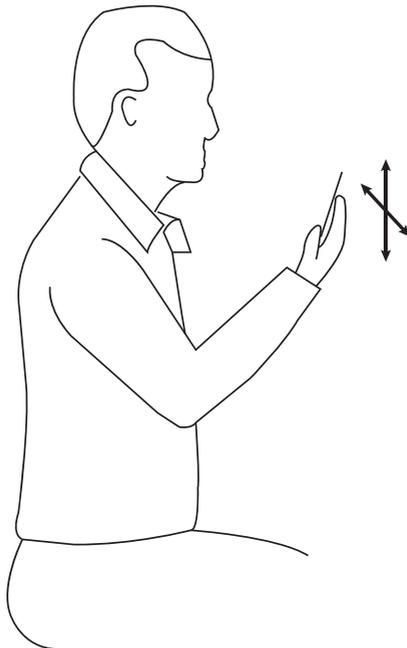
- 1 Sit in a comfortable position. Hold a playing card in each hand, level with your eyes and about 18 inches apart.
  - 2 Keeping your head still, move your eyes quickly from one card to the other, without stopping in between the cards. **Remember to move only your eyes.**
  - 3 As you improve, try to focus on a smaller and smaller detail on each card, eg nose, eyes or mouth.
- Repeat 15-20 times in a horizontal direction.
  - Repeat 15-20 times in a vertical direction.
  - Repeat 15-20 times in a diagonal direction.
  - Do 2-3 times daily.

**Only move your eyes.**



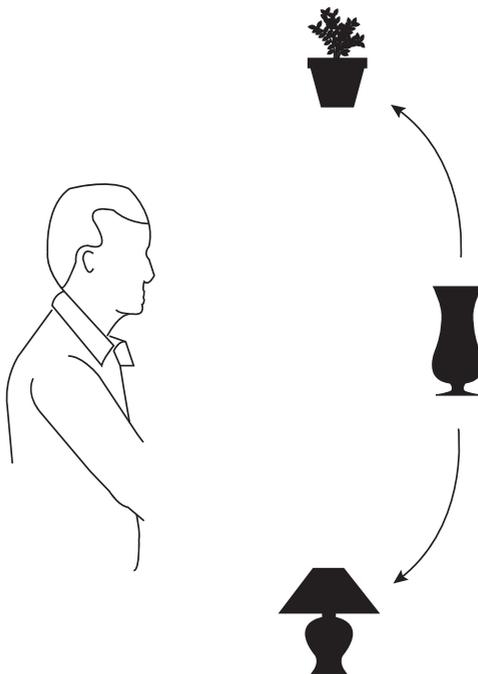
## Visual tracking

- 4 Sit in a comfortable position. Hold an object such as a playing card about 12 inches in front of your eyes.
  - 5 Slowly move the card horizontally (to the right, to the left and back to the centre). **Keep your head still and follow the card just with your eyes.**
  - 6 Repeat this moving the card vertically (up, down and back to the centre) and then diagonally both ways (up and left, down and right, back to centre; then up and right, down and left, and back to centre).
  - 7 To progress, move your arm at faster and faster speeds until you can no longer see the card clearly. Remember to keep your head still during this exercise and follow only with your eyes.
- Repeat 15-20 times in the horizontal direction.
  - Repeat 15-20 times in the vertical direction.
  - Repeat 15-20 times in the diagonal directions.
  - Do 2-3 times daily.



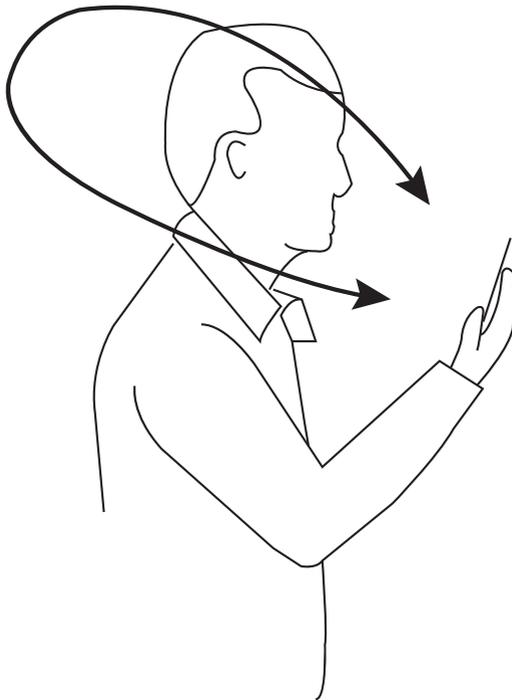
## Targets

- 8 Sit comfortably in a sofa or chair.
  - 9 Find three targets in your room at eye level. One should be over your left shoulder, one in front of you, and one over your right shoulder (any objects will do).
  - 10 Move your head to look at the left target, then the centre target, then the right target.
  - 11 To progress, start by moving your head slowly, but increase the speed of your head movement, so that eventually you are moving your head and sight rapidly between the targets.
- Repeat 10-15 times, turning your head without stopping.
  - Repeat 10-15 times, stopping at each target.
  - Do 2-3 times daily.



## Focussing while turning head

- 12 Sit in a comfortable position and bring your index finger up to about 12 inches in front of your nose.
  - 13 Focus on your finger while turning your head from side to side.
  - 14 Gradually increase the speed of the head turns.
  - 15 Do the same whilst moving your head up and down vertically.
- Repeat 15-20 times.
  - Do both directions 2-3 times daily.

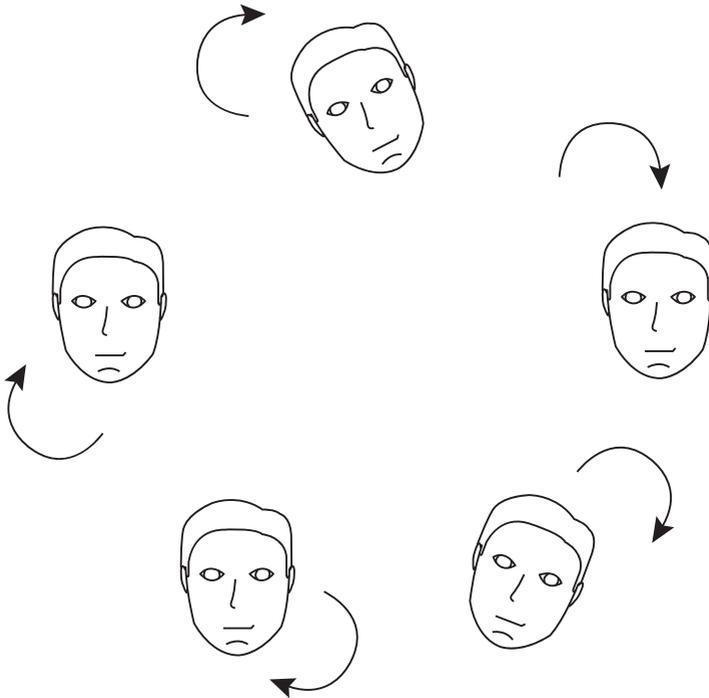


## Head circles

16 Sitting in a comfortable position, begin moving your head in a circular motion, with your eyes open.

17 Repeat this with your eyes closed.

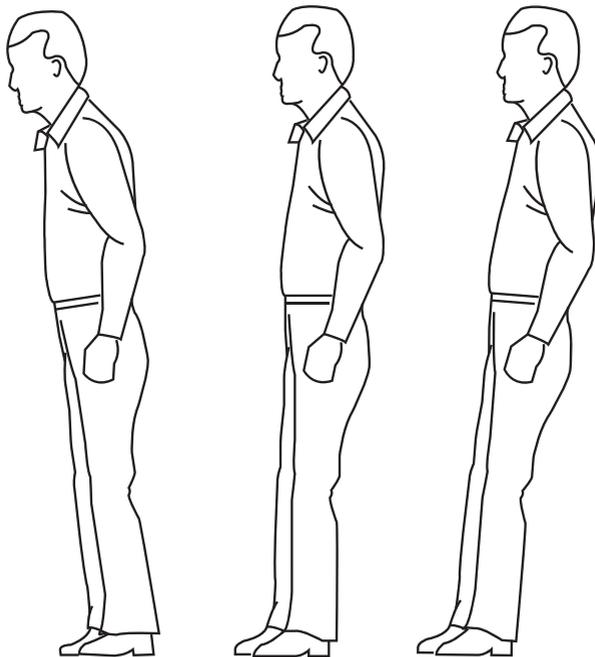
- Repeat 15-20 times
- Repeat 15-20 times in the opposite direction.
- Do both directions 2-3 times daily.
- Stop this exercise if you develop significant neck ache.



## Ankle sways

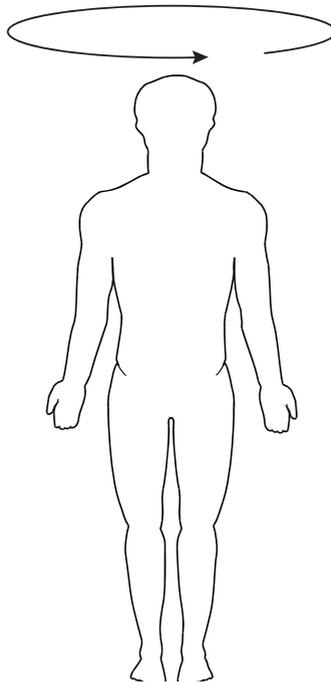
- 18 Stand with your feet shoulder distance apart, equal weight on both feet, arms relaxed at your side. Look straight ahead and close your eyes.
  - 19 Slowly shift your weight forward and then backward. Do not move very far, or bend at your hips. All movement should be at your ankles.
  - 20 Shift your weight from side to side, placing more weight first to your right side and then to the left. **Do not bend at the hips.**
  - 21 It may help to do this exercise with your back near a wall or with someone 'spotting' you from behind.
- Repeat 15-20 times
  - Do both directions 2-3 times daily
  - **Don't** bend at your hips

**Do** keep your eyes closed. If this is difficult, start with eyes open and then try eyes closed after a few days.



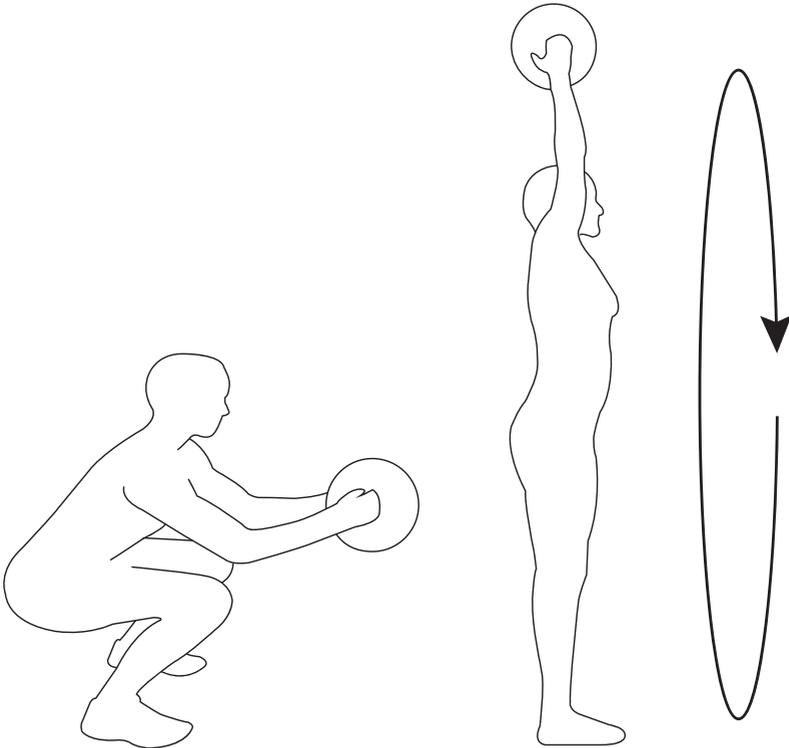
## Circle sway

- 22 Stand with your feet shoulder distance apart.
  - 23 Breathe deeply and relax. Focus your thoughts on feeling your feet in contact with the floor. Look straight ahead and focus on an object.
  - 24 Practise swaying your body in a circle. Sway forward, to the right side, to the rear, to the left side, and forward again.
  - 25 Begin with small circles. Do not bend at the hips.
  - 26 Gradually increase how far you can move your body without bending your hips, and without taking a step.
  - 27 It may be helpful to do this exercise with your back to a wall, or with someone 'spotting' you from behind.
- Repeat 15-20 times.
  - Repeat 15-20 times, swaying in the opposite direction.
  - Do both directions 2-3 times daily.



## Ball circles

- 28 Stand in a relaxed upright posture, weight equal on both feet. Hold a ball with both arms, arms straight. Keep your eyes on the ball.
  - 29 Keeping your arms straight, move the ball in a large complete circle. Follow the ball with your head and eyes.
  - 30 Make the circle bigger by lifting the ball high over your head, then low to the ground, bending your knees to touch the ground with the ball. Move smoothly and continuously.
  - 31 If dizziness increases, stop until it subsides, then start again.
- Repeat 15-20 times.
  - Repeat 15-20 times in the opposite direction.
  - Do both directions 2-3 times daily.



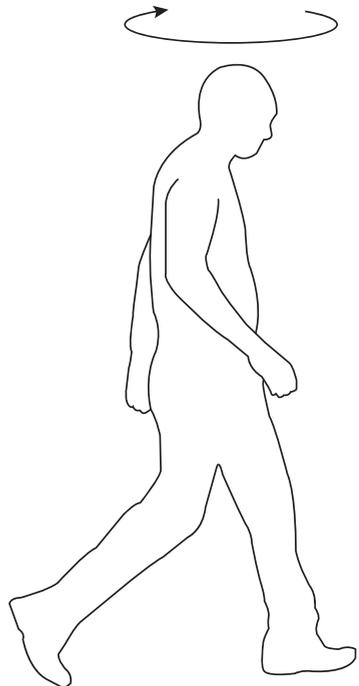
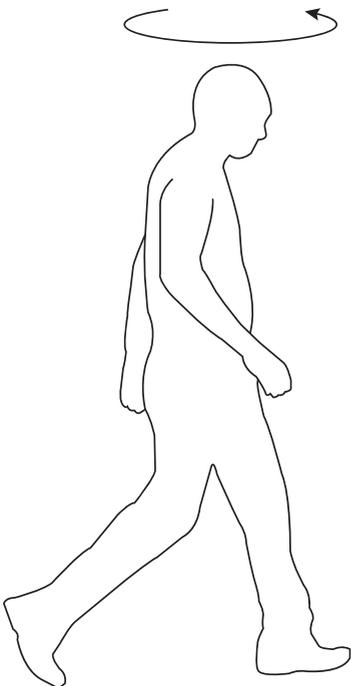
## Walk with head movement

32 Begin walking at a normal speed.

33 After three steps turn your head to look to your right, while continuing to walk.

34 After three steps turn your head to look to your left, while continuing to walk.

- Repeat 15-20 times.
- You can do this indoors by walking on the spot, or as part of normal walking outdoors.
- It may help at first to have someone walk alongside you (or stand alongside if walking on the spot).



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