

## Exercises: Instructions for Patients

complement each other, sending equal impulses to the brain. These inputs are essential for the maintenance of balance. Dizziness or vertigo and imbalance may occur if one or both balance centers are damaged. Although these symptoms may be very frightening, they are not usually serious or life-threatening, and can often be overcome by carrying out special exercises.

The purpose of the exercises is to build up a tolerance mechanism in the brain that compensates for the unequal balance of the two ears. The exercises stimulate the development of the tolerance mechanism and the more diligently and regularly they are performed, the sooner will the vertigo disappear.

The exercises should be carried out persistently for at least five minutes, three times daily and for as long as the vertigo persists. This may be for up to 1-3 months. A conscious effort should be made to seek out the head positions and movements that cause vertigo in so far as can be tolerated, because the more frequently vertigo is induced, the more quickly the brain compensation mechanism is built up.

Patients should not try to perform all the exercises at once. Rather, they should perform a group of exercises at a time, starting at the top of the list. Only when they can perform a particular section of exercises without feeling dizzy should they proceed to the next group.

Certain medications help to control the severe vertigo and associated symptoms of nausea and vomiting while brain compensation is being achieved, and such tablets may be taken in the initial stages if nausea or vomiting is a problem. As normal a life as possible is otherwise recommended. Early return to work and sports is helpful in rehabilitation.

### A. While Sitting

1. Eye movements . at first slowly, then quickly:
  - a. Up and down
  - b. From side to side
  - c. Focusing on a finger moving from about 50cm to 10cm away from the face.
2. Head movements . at first slowly, then quickly. Later with eyes closed:
  - a. Bending forward and backwards
  - b. Turning from side to side.
3. Bending forwards and picking up objects from the ground.

### B While standing

1. As in A1, and in 2, and 3 above
2. Changing from sitting to standing position with eyes open and shut
3. Throwing a small ball from hand to hand (above eye level).
4. Throwing ball from hand to hand under the knee.
5. Change from sitting to standing, turning around in between.

### C While moving about

1. Circle around a centre person who throws a ball back and forth to you.
2. Walk across room with eyes open and then closed.
3. Walk up and down a slope with eyes open and then closed.
4. Walk up and down steps with eyes open and then closed.
5. Any game involving stooping or stretching and aiming, such as skittles, bowels and basketball.