

The balance parts of the two ears compliment each other sending equal impulses to the brain which are essential for the maintenance of equilibrium of the head and body.

If either or both balance centres are damaged, equilibrium is upset. The result of this is vertigo or giddiness which may be accompanied by nausea and vomiting. Although this condition may be very frightening; it is not serious in that it does not, in itself, threaten life. It can, furthermore, be overcome by carrying out special exercises.

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

The exercise should be carried out persistently for at least five minutes, three times daily, and for as long as vertigo persists. This may be for one to three 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 is the brain compensation mechanism built up.

Certain medications help to control the vertigo while brain compensation is being achieved and any such tablets should be taken regularly during the course of exercises.

As normal a life as possible is meanwhile, to be recommended. Early return to work and sports are helpful in rehabilitation.

Diligence and perseverance will be required but the earlier and more regularly the balance exercise regime is carried out, the faster and more complete will be recovery to normal activity.

CAWTHORE – COOKSEY EXERCISES

A) In Bed

1. Eye movements – at first slow, then quick

- up and down
- from side to side
- focusing on finger moving from 3 feet to 1 foot away from face

2. Head movements at first slow, then quickly. Later with eyes closed

- Bending forwards and backwards
- Turning from side to side

B) Sitting

- 1/2 as above
- Shoulder shrugging and circling
- Bending forwards and picking up objects from the ground

C) Standing

1. as A) 1 and 2, and B) 3
2. Changing from sitting to standing position with eyes open and shut
3. Throwing a small ball from hand to hand (above eye level)

C) Standing

- 1 as A) 1 and 2, and B) 3
- Changing from sitting to standing position with eyes open and shut
- Throwing a small ball from hand to hand (above eye level)

D) Moving About

- Circle round centre person who will throw a large ball and to whom it will be returned
- Walk across room with eyes open and then closed
- Walk up and down slope with eyes open and then closed
- Walk up and down steps with eyes open and then closed
- Any game involving stooping or stretching and aiming such as skittles, bowls or basketball.

ENT Vertigo



An information leaflet for patients.

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