

Leaflet 11 The Principles of Cooksey-Cawthorne Exercises

The balance parts of the two ears complement each other sending equal impulses to 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 exercises 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 the vertigo will disappear.

The exercises must be carried out persistently for at least **FIVE MINUTES – THREE TIMES DAILY** and for as long as vertigo continues. 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, insofar as can be tolerated, because the more frequently vertigo is induced the more quickly the brain compensation is built up.

Certain medications may help to control the vertigo while brain compensation is being achieved and such tablets, if prescribed, 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.

N.B. The exercises themselves will cause vertigo and giddiness until the tolerance mechanisms are built up in the brain to overcome them, so care should be taken.

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A. Lying in Bed

1. Eye movements – at first slow, then quick.
 - a) up and down
 - b) side to side
 - c) focus on finger moving from 3 feet to 1 foot away from face.
2. Head movements – at first slow, then quick, later with eyes closed.
 - a) bend forwards and backwards
 - b) turn from side to side

B. Sitting

Repeat exercises 1 and 2.

3. Shoulder movements
 - a) shrugging
 - b) circling
4. Bend forwards and pick small object off the ground, throw it from hand to hand
 - a) under knees
 - b) above eye level

C. Standing

Repeat exercises 3 and 4

5. Change from sitting to standing with eyes open and shut
6. Change from sitting to standing and turn around in between

D. Moving around

7. Walk across the room with eyes open and then closed