

Cawthorne's Vestibular Exercises

If your unsteadiness or dizziness is brought on by quick changes in position or head movements, the exercises listed below should be practiced. The rationale for the use of these exercises is best explained by an example. You are familiar with the figure skater who is able to spin rapidly, stop suddenly and skate off without difficulty. He is able to do this because he trains or conditions his balance mechanism not to become dizzy. These exercises can help you in a similar manner. Stated simply, you must seek out and overcome those positions or situations which cause your dizziness. Avoiding them will only prolong your recovery.

Cawthorne's head exercises

Eye exercises (sitting in bed)

Look up, then down – at first slowly, then quickly – 20 times.
Focus on finger moving from 3 feet to 1 foot away
from face and back again – 20 times.

Head exercises (sitting in bed)

Bend head forward, then backward, with eyes open – slowly,
later quickly – 20 times.
Turn head from one side to the other – slowly, then quickly – 20
times. As dizziness improves, these head exercises should be done
with eyes closed.

Sitting

While sitting, shrug shoulders – 20 times.
Turn shoulders to the right, then to the left – 20 times.
Bend forward and pick up objects from ground and sit up – 20
times.

Standing

Change from sitting to standing, and back again, with eyes open –
20 times.
Repeat with eyes closed.
Throw a small rubber ball from hand to hand above eye level.
Throw a ball from hand to hand under one knee.

Moving about

Walk across the room with eyes open, then closed – 10 times.
Walk up and down a slope with eyes open, then closed