



## Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery

### BALANCE TRAINING EXERCISES

You have a balance problem that may improve with a rehabilitation program. Head motion stimulates the balance center of the inner ear. Like a new ice skater or gymnast, you can expect it will take some time for your balance to improve. The brain must learn to overcome the feeling of dizziness. Virtually all patients using these exercises will note improved balance, but it may take a few weeks. **DON'T GIVE UP!** It is important to start slowly because quick head movements can make anyone lightheaded at first. Slowly increase the speed and duration of exercises as tolerated. It is common for people to become dizzy during some of these exercises. This is a required part of the healing process. As in athletics: no pain, no gain.

### CAWTHORNE HEAD EXERCISES

Cawthorne head exercises should be carried out for 5 minutes, 10 times per day. You can expect dizziness when beginning. This feeling should lessen over time with repetition. When you first start the exercises, do them slowly. With time, increase the speed of each exercise until you are doing them quickly. Please be seated while doing them, unless otherwise indicated.

Eye exercises: With your head still and moving your eyes only, look up, then down – do this 20 times. With your head still and moving your eyes only, look from one side to the other – do this 20 times. Try to focus on an object at the end of each eye movement.

Head exercises: With eyes open, bend head forward, then backwards – do this 20 times. Turn head from one side to the other – do this 20 times. As dizziness lessens, try to do these exercises with eyes closed.

Sitting/Bending exercises: While sitting, shrug shoulders – do this 20 times. Turn shoulders to the right, then to the left – do this 20 times. Bend forward, pick up objects from the ground, and sit back up – do this 20 times.

Standing exercises: With eyes open, change from a sitting to a standing position and back again – do this 20 times. As dizziness lessens, do this with eyes closed (but only if you have a partner to help you). Throw a small rubber ball (or similar object) from hand to hand above eye level. Throw the object from hand to hand under one knee.

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## **EAR-EYE COORDINATION EXERCISES**

Begin in a sitting position. Choose an object on the wall, such as a clock or picture. Keep your eyes focused on the object from about 5 feet away. First, turn your head right to left and then left to right about 1 time per second, thus making the head motion like saying “no” – do this 20 times. Next, tilt your head right to left and then left to right about 1 time per second, like a pendulum or metronome – do this 20 times. Finally, tilt your head up and down about 1 time per second, making the head motion like nodding “yes” – do this 20 times.

## **EAR-BODY COORDINATION EXERCISES**

These should be repeated 10 times a day as tolerated. MAKE SURE TO HAVE SOMEONE WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES TO CATCH YOU SHOULD YOU START TO FALL.

Stand on a soft, compressible surface with your eyes open. Shift your weight between your left leg and your right leg. Do this for one minute.

Stand on a flat, firm surface with your eyes open. Rock back and forth between your heel and ball of foot without bending at the hip. Do this for one minute.

Stand on a flat, firm surface on a corner with your back against the wall, this time with your eyes closed. Stand still for one minute. Now, with eyes open, while standing in the corner, practice standing on your heels and then on your toes. Do this for one minute.

Walk across the room (with your partner) with eyes open, then again with eyes closed. Walk up and down steps (with you partner) with eyes open, then again with eyes closed. Walk up and down a slope (with your partner) with eyes open, then again with eyes closed. Perform these 10 times a day.

Try dancing carefully with your partner, performing frequent turns and bends. Any activity involving stooping or turning is generally good.

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