



Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center

Concussion / Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitation:

Head Injury and Dizziness



Why Am I Dizzy?

Dizziness is one of the symptoms that you may experience after a concussion/mild traumatic brain injury. There are several possible causes of your dizziness including:

- a problem in your inner ear
- an injury to the muscles and nerves in your upper neck
- minor changes in the parts of your brain that control balance
- minor changes in the parts of your brain that control eye movement and vision
- anxiety
- a medication side effect

Other symptoms associated with dizziness may include:

- ringing/buzzing in your ears
- ear pain
- hearing loss
- neck pain/stiffness
- headache
- imbalance
- blurred vision
- motion sensitivity
- exercise intolerance / change in your activity level

What Can I Do?

It is important to maintain your daily routine while managing your dizziness. Regular exercise and movement challenges your brain to adapt and recover. During the week or two following a concussion or mild traumatic brain injury, the vast majority of patients will recover from their dizziness and other associated symptoms.

Neck stretches – See additional handout on “Headache & Neck Pain.”

Dizziness Journal - Pay attention to the positions and activities that cause you to get dizzy and to how long the dizziness lasts. This information can help direct diagnosis and treatment. See the table below for an example of what information you should track and report to your healthcare provider about your dizziness:

What makes you dizzy?(i.e. position, movement, activity)	How long are you dizzy (i.e. seconds, hours)?	What makes you feel better?	Is there a certain time of day your dizziness is worse?

At-Home Vestibular Rehabilitation Exercises

Several basic gaze stability and balance exercises can be initiated if you feel that you have dizziness related to quick movements or head turns. The exercises should be done within your symptom tolerance. It is normal for your dizziness to get worse temporarily when starting exercises that challenge your body’s balance centers. Before beginning any new exercise, ensure you are in a safe place in the event you should lose your balance. Start these exercises sitting on a large surface such as a sofa or bed. Progress the exercise by standing next to a sturdy counter top or in a corner.



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X1 Viewing

Put a visual target such as a letter or a word on the wall 3 feet away. Turn your head left and right while keeping the target in focus. It is important for the target to stay in focus.

Try to sustain the head turns for at least 30 seconds, working up to 60 seconds. As your dizziness improves, you can move your head faster as long as you can keep the target clearly in focus.

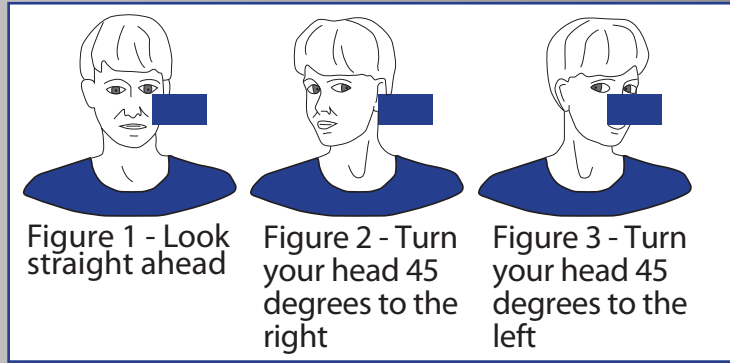


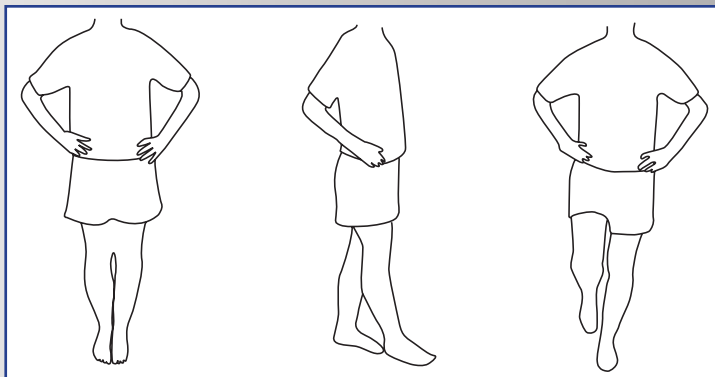
Figure 1 - Look straight ahead

Figure 2 - Turn your head 45 degrees to the right

Figure 3 - Turn your head 45 degrees to the left

Standing Balance

Try maintaining your balance with your feet together for 30 seconds. If this is hard, start with your feet slightly apart. If you can do this, then try increasing the challenge by the following modifications: standing with one foot in front of the other, standing on one leg, closing your eyes, turning your head right and left or looking up and down with your eyes open.



What's next?

Please contact your healthcare provider if your dizziness changes or gets worse with any of the above stated exercises.

This tool is to be used as a patient education resource during a visit with your provider.

Developed by Subject Matter Experts from the DoD and VA

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