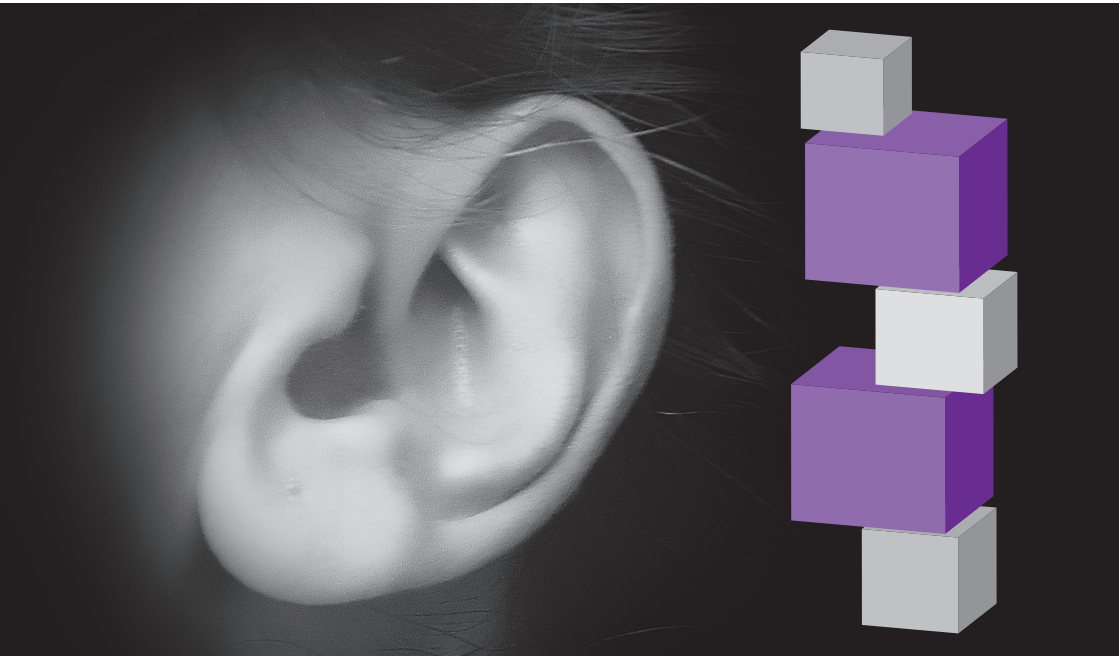


Balance Retraining Exercises



In the inner part of each ear, we have a balance mechanism. These send equal impulses to the brain, telling the brain where the head is in relation to the ground.

If one or both of the balance mechanisms is not working properly, either because of damage or because the blood supply that feeds it is slightly restricted, our balance will be upset. The result will be feelings of vertigo (dizziness) or unsteadiness. In some cases, this will be severe and may be accompanied by feeling queasy or even vomiting.



In many cases, however, it will just be a feeling of being slightly drunk, lightheaded or 'detached from reality'.

Whatever the experience, these feelings can be very frightening, even though they are not in any way life-threatening. Furthermore, they can normally be overcome by carrying out special exercises.

The purpose of the exercises is two-fold; to reduce neck tension, and to build up a tolerance to the feelings of dizziness by bringing them on deliberately in a safe and controlled way. The more you bring on the dizziness by doing the exercises, the more quickly the brain will get used to it, and the dizziness will stop being a problem.

Ideally, the exercises should be carried out 3 or 4 times a day, but if this is not possible, try to do them as often as you can.

If you are taking medication for the dizziness, continue to take this as normal for the time being.

The exercises should be practised for as long as the symptoms persist, which is usually 2 or 3 months. In the meantime, try and lead as normal life as possible and try to return to work and sports as soon as you feel able.

You will need willpower and perseverance, and the encouragement of a partner or friend will be a great advantage! However, the more regularly and thoroughly you practise your exercises, the faster and more complete will be your recovery.

Introductory Balance Retraining Exercises

These exercises should be carried out at home, standing with your back to a sofa or a bed, so that you can sit down easily if you need to. Start the exercises gently and gradually, and build up the number and increase the range of movement as you feel your confidence growing. You will probably want to have somebody else there, at least to start with.

The following exercises are progressive and can be used as a complete programme or as individual exercises moving down the list as confidence improves.

Always start with a warm-up: roll your shoulders for a minute or so to loosen them up.

- 1 Keep your head still and move your eyes to the ceiling, then down to the floor.
- 2 Keep your head still and move your eyes right and left.
- 3 Focus on your index finger as you bring it from arm's-length away up to your nose, then out again.
- 4 Gently move your head up and down, as if looking down at your feet and then looking up at the sky.
- 5 Gently move your head to the left, to the right, and then to the left again, as if crossing the road.
- 6 With your hands on the fronts of your thighs, bend your body forward until your hands come to your knees or just beyond, then come back up again.
- 7 If you can, try to repeat exercise 6 but turning your upper body around to the right and then to the left before standing up.

Try to do these exercises up to 5 times each with your eyes open, and then, when you feel more confident, try some with your eyes closed as well – again, do them up to 5 times.

If you have any problems with any of these exercises, don't worry, just stop doing them and telephone us, so we can discuss what to do!

Hearing Therapist

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By Appointment Only



Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS staff are available to offer advice or information on healthcare matters. The office is in the Main Foyer (Gate 4) of Doncaster Royal Infirmary. Contact can be made either in person, by telephone or email. PALS staff can also visit inpatients on all Trust sites.

The contact details are:

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