

## Vestibular Rehab for Techs and Patients

**Explain:** Strengthening the vestibular system is a lot like strengthening your muscles.

To strengthen your muscles, you must place them under tension with resistance or a load for several repetitions to make them fatigue or be challenged. You allow them to recover for a minute or two and then repeat the exercise 3 to 5 times or sets. Too much may hurt you. No challenge won't help you. Somewhere in between will yield the results you want.

It is the same for vestibular strengthening or training. You do an exercise that is challenging to your vestibular system for several repetitions to make yourself mildly dizzy. You allow your system to recover for a minute or two, and then repeat the exercises 3 to 5 times or sets. Too much will make you nauseated and vomit, or so dizzy that you fall. No challenge won't help you. Somewhere in between will yield the results you want.

### Variables

There are variables you can alter when strength training to make the exercise more or less challenging. So it is with vestibular training. They are:

Your Stance - Vision - Inner Ear - Speed - Distance Moved - Surface Type

- **Stance:** wide base vs narrow
- **Vision:** eyes open with fixed gaze vs closed vs moving vs low light vs busy environment
- **Inner Ear:** head still vs moving vs tilted
- **Speed:** slow vs fast
- **Distance:** small vs large
- **Surface:** firm, flat, and level vs uneven, moving, or unpredictable
- **Brain Teasers:** distractions, secondary tasks

### The Goal

The goal is to make yourself mildly dizzy and then recover, perform for 1-2 minutes every hour or 10-15 minutes twice a day, and never do so much that you feel nauseated or unsafe.

## **Training Stages**

There are 4 general stages of vestibular exercises:

1. Eye Movement
2. Head Movement
3. Trunk or Torso Movement
4. Stepping or Walking

### **Sample Exercises**

#### Stage 1 Eye Movement:

Seated, Seated on Ball, Standing, then Standing on Foam  
(each with increasing amounts of distraction)

#### Stage 2 Eye and/or Head Movement:

Feet Together, Tandem Stance, then Single Leg Stance  
Add Foam then BOSU  
(each with increasing amounts of distraction)

#### Stage 3 Eye, Head, and Torso Movement:

Marching  
Stool Tapping  
Trunk Rotation or Reaching (side lying, seated, then standing)  
Washing Machine- quarter, half, then full turns at increasing speeds  
Single Leg Deadlifts

#### Stage 4 Eye, Head, and Stepping or Walking:

Forward-Backward Stepping in place then two then three steps...  
Walking forward, sideways, backward, then varied  
3-Step Pivot- floor, foam, BOSU, then alternating  
Grapevine or Karaoke  
Ladder Drills