

# COGNITIVE SYMPTOMS OF VESTIBULAR DISORDERS

Vestibular disorders can affect your ability to think, specifically to pay attention and concentrate, to remember, to reason, and to problem solve. Often times, you may find you are easily distracted, both by external stimuli (others talking, TV) and by internal stimuli (your thoughts and feelings). **Multi-tasking** may be compromised, and your ability to **sequence** may be affected. For example, you may find yourself mixing up sounds while speaking, or reversing numbers or letters when speaking or writing.

## COGNITIVE STAMINA AND ENERGY IS OFTEN REDUCED

If you are using a great deal of energy to maintain equilibrium and stay steady, it is unlikely that you will have very much left over for other activities. Certain activities that you were able to perform with ease before, may seem to require excessive effort. Many patients describe this as “brain fog.”

## IMPAIRMENTS WITH SHORT TERM MEMORY

Many individuals also note impairments with **short term memory**. The cognitive strain of a vestibular disorder can interfere with your brain’s ability to process information and “deposit” it properly so it can be recalled at a later date.

## PROBLEMS WITH VISUAL-SPATIAL TASKS MAY ARISE

Due to the intricate link between the visual and vestibular systems, problems with **visual-spatial tasks** may arise. Eye-hand coordination may be impacted, or other patients may notice their depth perception is altered.

## EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING CAN ALSO BE IMPAIRED

**Executive functioning**, the automatic process of organizing thoughts and executing plans, can also be impaired. Plans, even as simple as getting dressed in the morning, may be completely disorganized. You may find it difficult to make decisions, such as what to have for breakfast.

For some individuals, a neuropsychological evaluation performed by an occupational therapist, speech therapist, or psychologist may be necessary. This cognitive rehab consists of increasing awareness through self-monitoring, cognitive retraining, and learning compensatory strategies.



## COPING STRATEGIES



Pace yourself - set a timer with housework; only visit 1-2 stores per trip.



Conduct self-checks of your mental energy throughout the day.



Read from a print-out as opposed to a computer/phone screen if bothersome.



Write down to-do lists or other information that you may forget. Consider using a planner/organizer and post-it notes.



Create a structure/routine to your day and follow it consistently.



Visit large stores at off peak-hours.