



WHY DOES VRT MAKE ME DIZZY?

FROM "PT TIPS" BY BETH WAGNER, DPT

Watch on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/-dY3JVeX3bo>

Overview

1. Vestibular rehabilitation exercises stimulate the vestibular system, which causes increased dizziness temporarily. To get rid of dizziness, we need to improve communication between the brain, the inner ear, the eyes, and our sensory system so that all of these systems work together the way they should for normal function.
2. Like strengthening exercises make us feel weak while we're doing them, vestibular exercises will make us feel vestibular symptoms, including dizziness, motion sensitivity, feeling off kilter.
3. How much is too much? Just as with other exercise programs, more is not always better. You don't need to make yourself miserable to get better.
4. Guidelines for optimal recovery AND reasonable discomfort.
 - a. 20-minute guideline: Any increase in dizziness you experience while doing the exercises should go away within 20 minutes. You may still feel your baseline dizziness, but the increase due to the exercises should fully resolve after 20 minutes of completing the session. If it lasts longer, decrease the reps, # of exercises, speed of movement, etc., until you recover within 20 minutes. Gradually increase reps, etc. day by day, week by week, as tolerable.
 - a. Rate your dizziness before you start the exercises on a scale of 0-10 (0 – no dizziness, 10 – max dizzy). Decide how high you're willing to let your dizziness go during the exercise. Maybe you're at a 3 and you're willing to let your dizziness go to a 7, temporarily, just during the exercises. Then, as you do the exercises, if you get to a 7, simply stop the exercise and rest. When your dizziness settles back down, continue the exercises. Whether the rest break is one minute, 5 minutes or a whole day. This is a great way to feel like you're in control of your symptoms instead of feeling like you're at their mercy. With time and practice, that process of resting, recovering, and continuing without becoming overwhelmed will help you tolerate more and ultimately it will allow you to get through the exercises and make progress when you otherwise might have just stopped doing them altogether.
2. Refer to VeDA (vestibular.org) for assistance in finding appropriate resources.

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Discussion Questions:

1. What is your experience with VRT exercises?
 - a. Did they make you dizzy?
 - b. Did your PT explain the 20 minute guideline?
 - c. How well does/did it work for you?
2. Did your PT (or you) modify your exercises to help you tolerate them better?
3. What have you found for yourself to be helpful in managing or tolerating VRT?
4. How would it feel to know that it's OK to NOT push yourself too hard when doing VRT exercises?
5. If you stopped doing VRT because it made you dizzy, would you try it again with this new knowledge?

Beth Wagner's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/c/MovementFunction>

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