



Facilitator's Guide

LOW-IMPACT EXERCISES FOR PEOPLE WITH VESTIBULAR DISORDERS

This discussion guide helps support group leaders facilitate a conversation about safe, accessible, and vestibular-friendly exercise options that people can do at home. The goal is to encourage gentle movement and reduce fear of activity while emphasizing safety, self-awareness, and consultation with healthcare providers.

Key Message

Physical activity can help improve strength, flexibility, mood, and even confidence in balance. However, for people with vestibular disorders, certain movements may worsen symptoms. This discussion is not about vestibular rehabilitation exercises, which should always be performed under the supervision of a vestibular physical therapist. Instead, it focuses on **general fitness activities** that can be adapted for people with dizziness or balance challenges.

Discussion Goals

1. Explore low-impact exercise options that can be done safely at home.
2. Share personal experiences with movement and how it affects symptoms.
3. Reduce fear or hesitation around exercise by emphasizing pacing and safety.
4. Highlight the importance of consulting a healthcare provider before beginning or changing any exercise routine.

Facilitator Talking Points

1. Safety First

- Always check with your healthcare provider or vestibular therapist before trying a new activity.
- Listen to your body—if something increases dizziness or imbalance, stop and rest.
- Choose stable, clutter-free spaces and use support (walls, counters, or chairs) for balance.
- Avoid quick head turns, rolling movements, or exercises that involve bending or spinning.

VESTIBULAR DISORDERS ASSOCIATION



- If standing feels unsafe, do exercises seated.

2. Honor Your Limitations

- Everyone's vestibular condition is unique—what works for one person may not work for another.
- Progress is personal; it's okay to take breaks or modify activities.
- Celebrate small wins, like walking across the room more confidently or doing a few minutes longer than last time.

3. Mind-Body Awareness

- Gentle movement can reduce anxiety and support vestibular compensation.
- Incorporate breathing, stretching, or mindfulness to connect physical and mental wellness.
- If symptoms flare, use grounding strategies (steady your gaze, focus on breathing, or hold onto a stable object).

4. Benefits of Regular Movement

- Improves circulation and muscle tone, supporting balance and stability.
- Boosts energy, mood, and confidence in daily activities.
- Can reduce secondary symptoms like neck stiffness, fatigue, and deconditioning.

Sample Low-Impact Exercise Ideas

Encourage participants to discuss what works for them and share trusted online programs or videos. Examples include:

- Seated Chair Exercises - Gentle stretches, leg lifts, or arm raises done while seated.
- Stationary Cycling - A recumbent bike provides stability while improving cardiovascular health.
- Walking Indoors - Short walks around the house or yard can build endurance safely.
- Resistance Band Training - Strengthen muscles without heavy weights; use while seated or holding onto a stable surface.
- Balance & Flexibility Classes - Look for beginner-friendly or chair-based options online.

VESTIBULAR DISORDERS ASSOCIATION



- Mindful Movement - Gentle yoga, tai chi, or stretching routines focused on breathing and awareness.

When recommending online classes, remind participants to choose videos that include clear safety guidance, offer modifications, and are created by qualified instructors familiar with mobility or balance challenges.

Encouraging Participation

Ask open-ended questions to invite sharing:

- What kinds of movement or activities help you feel better physically or emotionally?
- Have you found a way to stay active safely at home?
- What's one small goal you might set for yourself this week related to movement?
- How do you know when your body needs rest versus when gentle movement might help?

Encourage participants to share links to trusted resources or video classes they've enjoyed.

Additional Resources

Leaders may wish to direct participants to:

- Free online chair-based or low-impact classes (e.g., community fitness programs or senior wellness sites). Examples: AARP, Firebush, Silver Sneakers.
- Local physical therapists who offer group movement classes designed for people with balance issues.
- VeDA's website articles on Vestibular-Friendly Exercises and related wellness topics.

Closing Reflection

End the discussion by reminding participants:

"Movement is not about perfection—it's about connection. Listen to your body, honor your limits, and move in ways that feel supportive to you. Even small, steady steps can lead to meaningful progress."

VESTIBULAR DISORDERS ASSOCIATION