

The **well** Report.... the way to Live **well** !

What Is Vertigo?

Vertigo is the sensation of spinning—even when you're perfectly still, you might feel like you're moving or that the room is moving around you. Most causes of vertigo involve the inner ear ("vestibular system"). A number of conditions can produce vertigo, such as:

- Inner ear infections or disorders
- Migraines
- Tumors, such as acoustic neuroma
- Surgery that removes or injures the inner ear or its nerves
- Head injury that results in injury to the inner ears
- A hole in the inner ear
- Stroke

You also might have:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Sweating
- Abnormal eye movements

One of the most common forms of vertigo is benign paroxysmal positional vertigo, an inner-ear problem that causes short periods of a spinning sensation when your head is moved in certain positions.



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- Physical therapy treatments for dizziness can take many forms. The type of exercise that your therapist designs for you will depend on your unique problems
- 1 in 4 older adults who live at home will fall this year
- Yoga can help improve balance and strength.



Finding Balance with Yoga

If the word "yoga" conjures up for you images of slender women dressed in spandex twisting themselves into pretzels, or rooms full of people chanting and burning incense, think again.

Physical therapists (PTs) throughout the country are implementing yoga into their practices or encouraging their patients to find a yoga class. They're helping patients of all ages—from youth to the elderly—improve their bodies and their overall health. Evidence-based research indicates that yoga can and does make a significant difference.

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HOW CAN PHYSICAL THERAPY HELP WITH VERTIGO?

Based on your physical therapist's evaluation and your goals for recovery, the therapist will customize a treatment plan for you. The specific treatments will depend on the cause of your vertigo. Your therapist's main focus is to help you get moving again and manage the vertigo at the same time. Treatment may include specialized head and neck movements or other exercises to help eliminate your symptoms. Conditions such as benign paroxysmal positional vertigo have very specific tests and treatments.

If you have dizziness and balance problems after your vertigo has stopped, your physical therapist can develop a treatment plan that targets those problems. Your physical therapist will teach you strategies to help you cope with your symptoms.

Do certain activities or chores around the house cause you to become dizzy? Your therapist will show you how to do those activities in a different way to help reduce the dizziness.

Have simple activities become difficult and cause fatigue and more dizziness? Your therapist will help you work through these symptoms right away so you can get moving again and return to your roles at home and at work more quickly.

Physical therapy treatments for dizziness can take many forms. The type of exercise that your therapist designs for you will depend on your unique problems and might include:

Exercises to improve your balance

Exercises to help the brain "correct" differences between your inner ears

Exercises to improve your ability to focus your eyes and vision

In addition, your physical therapist might prescribe exercises to improve your strength, your flexibility, and your heart health—with the goal of improving your overall physical health and well being.

In summary, Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV) is treated successfully with Physical Therapy using a combination of manual therapy, postural education and canalith repositioning techniques.

- Symptom free in 2-4 visits
- No medications
- Evidence based
- Painless
- Covered by most insurance

BALANCE AND PHYSICAL THERAPY

If you consult a physical therapist about falls and balance, he or she will likely review your medical history and determine your general physical condition, as well as conduct an inventory of tests specifically designed to measure balance and gait (your individual style of walking). If you have fallen before, your physical therapist will ask you to describe the accident in some detail to find out what caused the fall. (Just as important as actual falls are “near-falls” – instances in which you were on your way down but managed to “hang on.”)

After your physical therapist has determined what is impairing your balance, he or she will design a program of exercises and activities just for you, with an emphasis on strength, flexibility, and proper gait. All exercises would be planned for maximum safety and security. Your physical therapist may also perform specific interventions to increase your range of motion and musculo-skeletal flexibility. If you have balance problems related to the inner ear, your physical therapist may also try interventions known as vestibular rehabilitation. Vestibular rehabilitation includes techniques that help the inner ear respond to a change in position. Conditions that may require vestibular rehabilitation include vertigo, dizziness, or nausea.

If necessary, your physical therapist may also prescribe assistive devices for walking (such as canes, crutches, or walkers). Make sure the tips on canes and crutches are large (and spiked, if necessary, for icy conditions), and that canes are high enough (they should come up to your hip).

Appropriate footwear is another major consideration. Wearing a good pair of lace-up walking shoes will help support your foot and provide necessary cushioning for your joints; this will make walking safer and more comfortable. Avoid high heels, slippers, and open-toed sandals, which can cause you to trip.



The Great Balancing Act

Anyone who has ever slipped on a patch of ice knows how unnerving it can be to lose your balance – for a moment your world is literally turned upside down.

Yet balance –the ability to control and maintain your body’s position as it moves through space – is such an integral, ever-present part of daily life that most people rarely give it conscious thought.

There are conditions, however, that may impair your sense of balance and contribute to falls. The effects of aging are the most common causes of balance problems; injury and disease can also trigger problems.

Because falling is such a common and potentially serious problem – 1 in 4 people over the age of 65 (who live at home) will fall during the next year – it’s important to find out what you can do to decrease your risk and improve your general health and mobility.



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My PT Story by Stephanie N.

Stephanie came to therapy with vertigo and dizziness with position changes. After one visit of vestibular training her symptoms resolved and she has been free of dizziness since.

“I had been experiencing Vertigo symptoms for over 4 weeks. Frustrated and a little scared, I went to my primary physician and he felt Physical Therapy would be the next step. He called, and bless their hearts got me in that same day! Nervous, but ready to be better, I headed to the hospital. Kevin asked me questions and prepared me for what the treatment would be. After one treatment I was not running into walls when I woke up! I had been, like I said doing this for 4 weeks! With the exercises prescribed and a couple days later, I was feeling back to normal. Have not had symptoms since! Thank you for getting in right away and have such a caring and great experience! Most of all curing me!”

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