

Vestibular Rehabilitation: Lifestyle Changes

Anxiety, stress, lack of sleep, too much caffeine or sugar, poor hydration, and lack of physical activity can limit your progress toward recovery from inner ear issues. Many people find that simple lifestyle changes can help them feel better. Here are several changes you can try:

Get good sleep

- Try to get 7-8 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night.
- Go to bed and get up around the same time each day.
- Avoid screen time (looking at your phone or computer screen) 1 hour before bedtime.

Limit caffeine and alcohol

- Limit coffee, tea, and soft drinks to 8-16 ounces (oz) each day (for example, no more than 1-2 regular cups of coffee or tea and no more than 1 regular can of soda).
- Avoid drinking or eating anything with caffeine after noon (12:00 PM) so it does not affect your sleep.
- Avoid alcohol, as it can have a bad effect on your inner ear fluid.

Drink water

- Drink 48-64 oz of water each day to stay well hydrated. This is about a half gallon, or 3-4 standard size bottles of water.

Eat a healthy diet

- Eat 4-5 smaller healthy meals each day.
- Avoid eating and drinking too much sugar and salt.

Manage your nausea


- Eat and drink slowly.
- Eat small, frequent, bland meals, like the BRAT diet (Bananas, Rice, Applesauce, Toast).
- Try drinking ginger or peppermint tea.
- If you start to feel nauseous, try placing a cold pack on the back of your neck for 10 minutes.





Get aerobic exercise

- We recommend doing a daily walking program. Have a family or friend join you at first so you can focus on staying relaxed while walking.
 - Start by walking 5-10 minutes twice per day, and slowly increase to walking 20-30 minutes every day as you're able.
 - As you become more comfortable walking, be sure to look around and move your head during your walks.

Manage feelings of stress and anxiety

- Ask for and accept help when you need it.
- Try deep breathing exercises, grounding, or other relaxation techniques to help keep your anxiety under control.
- Seek out social support from professionals, family, and friends.
- Think about joining a support group or working with a psychologist or counselor.

Online resources for managing stress and anxiety	
<p>“Calm Breathing” handout from the UM Depression Center: UMMentalHealth.info/toolkit-download/pdf/CalmBreathing.pdf</p>	

Online resources for managing stress and anxiety	
<p>“Relaxation Techniques” handout from TherapistAid.com: TherapistAid.com/worksheets/relaxation-techniques</p>	
<p>“Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)” handout from the UM Depression Center: UMMentalHealth.info/toolkit-download/pdf/CognitiveBehavioralTherapyCBT.pdf</p>	
<p>Find a therapist or social worker through Psychology Today: PsychologyToday.com/us</p>	
<p>Find a support group through the Vestibular Disorders Association: Vestibular.org/article/coping-support/support-groups</p>	

Disclaimer: This document contains instructions for occupational and/or physical therapy exercises developed by University of Michigan Health. Your health care provider has determined that these exercises are beneficial to you based on your condition at this time. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan, including whether it is appropriate to continue doing these exercises should your condition change.

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