

Improving Gaze, Posture and Balance

What You Can Do

Here are some exercises to stabilize your gaze and posture, and improve balance. They should be done several times a day. In the beginning, you may feel dizzy and lose your balance, so ask a family member or friend to stand beside you to keep you from falling. Be especially careful when doing the exercises with your eyes closed.

SITTING EXERCISES

Head and Eye Movements

- Keeping head still, look up and then down.
- Keeping head still, look side to side.
- Hold you finger out at arm's length. Focus on your finger and bring it in towards your nose, then back out again.
- Move your head slowly form side to side, then up and down with your eyes open.
- Repeat with your eyes closed.

Head and Body Movements

- Place an object on the floor in front of you. Reach down to pick it up, looking down at the object as you bend over. Then return to an upright position, looking back up (straight ahead).
- Bend forward and pass the object back and forth under you knees.

STANDING EXERCISES

- Start in a seated position, stand up, then sit down again.
- Repeat with eyes closed.
- Repeat again, but this time turn in a full circle while standing before sitting down again.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Carefully walk up and down stairs with eyes open, then closed.
- While standing, practice making sudden 90-degree turns—first with eyes open, then closed.
- While walking, look side to side. This is best done in a grocery store. Read labels as you walk down an aisle.
- Practice standing on one foot, first with eyes open and then closed
- Practice standing, then walking on a soft surface (e.g., egg crate mattress, pillow or foam mat.

Adapted from: Eaton DA, Roland PS. Dizziness in the older adult, Part 1. Evaluation and general treatment strategies. *Geriatrics* 2003; 58(4):28-6.

