

# Vestibular and Balance Rehabilitation Therapy

## Who Can Benefit?

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### Fact Sheet

Vestibular rehabilitation can be an effective treatment for patients with dizziness and balance disorders. The purpose of vestibular rehabilitation is to facilitate compensation after peripheral and central vestibular dysfunction has occurred, with the goals of decreasing symptoms of dizziness and vertigo, improving balance, and facilitating a return to previous activities. Evidence exists to support its effectiveness in a variety of conditions. There is also evidence that suggests vestibular rehabilitation can be more effective than medication alone for long-term improvements in symptoms and function.<sup>1</sup> Below is a list of conditions that benefit from vestibular rehabilitation.

Diagnosis	Expected Outcomes
Unilateral vestibular loss (vestibular neuritis, labyrinthitis, acoustic neuroma)	Good: Return to baseline level of function <sup>2</sup>
Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo	Good: Resolution of symptoms when treated with appropriate canalith repositioning maneuver <sup>3</sup>
Bilateral vestibular loss	Moderate: A significant level of impairment is likely following therapy, but the patient can expect improved balance and dynamic visual acuity with treatment <sup>4</sup>
Central vestibular dysfunction (stroke, brain injury, migraine)	Moderate: Recovery will take longer compared to peripheral vestibular dysfunction, but the patient can expect improvements in balance and decreased symptoms of dizziness <sup>5,6,7</sup>
Presbystasis (disequilibrium of aging)	Moderate: Patient can experience decreased dizziness, improved balance, decreased fall risk <sup>8</sup>
Movement or visually provoked dizziness	Moderate: Decreased symptoms of dizziness <sup>9,10</sup>

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The following conditions would *not* benefit from vestibular therapy:<sup>5,6,11</sup>

1. Fluctuating vestibular loss (Meniere's disease, semicircular canal dehiscence, perilymphatic fistula), *unless* the patient exhibits chronic imbalance or dizziness between the episodes.
2. Spontaneous or unprovoked dizziness.

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