

Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV) Exercise

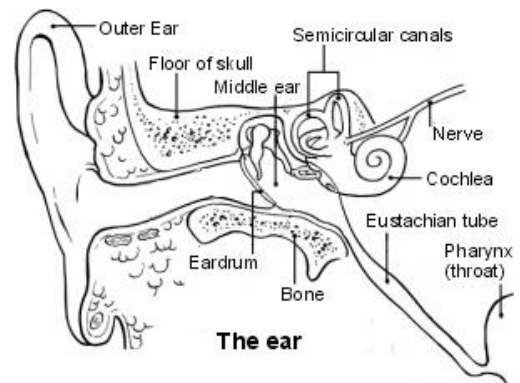
The Balance system

In order for us to balance, we all rely on the balance organs in our inner ears (the semicircular canals).

What is BPPV?

BPPV is an abbreviation for Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo.

- Benign means it is **not** a serious cause
- Paroxysmal means recurring sudden episode of symptoms
- Positional means that the symptoms are made worse by certain head movements or positions
- Vertigo is a dizziness associated with a spinning sensation, which on occasions can make you feel nauseous or even vomit



BPPV is thought to be caused by small crystals. These crystals do not usually cause a problem unless they become loose in one of the ear's fluid-filled canals.

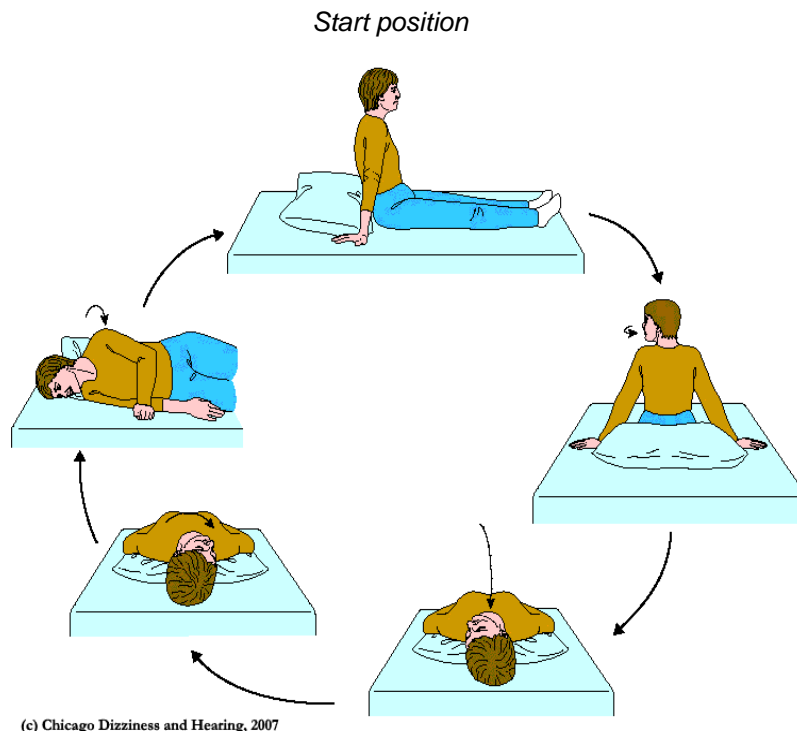
When your head is still, the crystals sit at the bottom of the canal. However, certain head movements such as rolling over in bed, looking up and down or bending over, can cause them to be swept along the fluid-filled semicircular canal, where they brush against the sensitive hairs that line the canal. This sends extra, confusing messages to your brain, which responds by causing vertigo/dizziness. You may also experience nausea and nystagmus, which is where your eyes shake from side to side.

Episodes of BPPV can clear up within a few days, but if not you can be referred to a Physiotherapist who can assess and treat your BPPV.

The Physiotherapist would have completed an assessment to confirm the diagnosis by performing a Dix Hallpike Test, which is when you are put into positions to see your symptoms.

Once BPPV has been confirmed, the Physiotherapist can treat you immediately with an Epley Manoeuvre. This can be done at the same time as the test and is simply a continuation of the movement. This will help to move the crystals into a less sensitive area and aid with their reabsorption.

Treatment – Epley Manoeuvre



This manoeuvre can also be done as a home exercise and can be taught by your Physiotherapist.

The method (for the left side) is performed as shown on the diagram. Stay in each of the supine (lying down) positions for 1 minute, and in the sitting upright position (top) for 1 minute. One cycle takes 4 minutes. The mirror image of this procedure is used for the right ear.

What to expect after treatment

It is quite normal to feel some dizziness after treatment. Sometimes it only takes one treatment to dislodge the debris and the symptoms of dizziness will resolve or it can take a number of sessions to be successful.

If after a number of treatment sessions it has been unsuccessful, it may be necessary for you to be referred to an Ear Nose and Throat specialist by your GP. The Physiotherapist will organise this.

Watch a video from Torbay Hospital Physiotherapy Team on 'How to Treat Vertigo at Home with the Epley Manoeuvre': <https://player.vimeo.com/video/200644588>

Find more useful reading by visiting www.patient.co.uk/health/benign-paroxysmal-positional-vertigo-leaflet