

## VESTIBULAR REHABILITATION EXERCISES

The following exercises have been taken from our own experience in the clinic and from the following sources: *Abatzides, G.J. and Kitsios, A., "The role of rehabilitation in the treatment of balance disorders: Journal of Back and Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation 12:101-112 (1999); Herdman, S.J. Vestibular Rehabilitation, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Contemporary Perspectives in Rehabilitation, Philadelphia: F.A Davis Co. (2000).*

**The child should choose the activities and should have absolute control over how long they are performed. Offer, but do not force, these activities on a child as the vestibular system is constantly adapting and what works one day may be aversive on another. In general, moving the head or the body in space or watching moving targets are the most effective.**

1. **Swinging, rocking, jumping**
2. **Rotating chair:** The child sits in an office chair or other chair that can spin easily and is rotated up to 20 times, changing direction frequently. Stop immediately if the child appears uncertain or if they want to get down from the chair. Children who are unstable can be placed in an adult's lap and rocked side to side (slowly) rather than spun.
3. **Visual Pursuit:** Hold an object at eye level, a comfortable distance away from the child's face and then move the object smoothly from the left to the right slowly while the child follows the object with the eyes alone. Change direction and move the target in all directions, increasing speed over time.
4. **Balance:** The child walks up and down a low ramp while holding an adult's hand. Increase the slope (rake) of the incline as the child improves. Sitting on balance balls can also be used to help improve balance, or standing on boards with a rounded bottom.
5. **Obstacle Course.**
6. **Gaze Stabilization:** The child stands on an uneven, soft, or movable surface (e.g. foam, trampoline or tilt board) and focuses on a toy or interesting object that is moving either diagonally, horizontally, or vertically in front of them. Change the trajectory, direction, and speed of the object movement as the child watches.
7. **Targets and Optic Flow:** Play catch with balls of varying diameters and textures, increasing the distance between players over time. If the child has difficulty catching a ball, use a balloon rather than a ball. Increase difficulty by using smaller and harder balls to increase the speed and challenge of the game.
8. **Steps, Curbs and Parking Blocks:** Practice walking smoothly up steps, curbs and parking blocks.