

ENT Southlake

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Home Epley Maneuver

What is the home Epley maneuver?

The home Epley maneuver is a type of exercise help that helps to treat the symptoms of benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV). You can do this exercise at home.

BPPV is caused by a problem in your inner ear. Your semicircular canals are found inside your ear. They detect motion and send this information to your brain. The utricle is a nearby part of the ear. It contains calcium crystals (canaliths) that help it detect movement.

Sometimes these crystals detach from the utricle and end up inside the semicircular canals. When these crystals move inside the canals, they may send incorrect signals to your brain about your position. This can make you feel like the world is spinning. This is called vertigo.

Dr. John Epley designed a series of movements to dislodge the crystals from the semicircular canals. These movements bring the crystals back to the utricle, where they belong. This treats the symptoms of vertigo.

The original Epley maneuver was designed to be done with a healthcare provider. The home Epley maneuver is similar. These are a series of movements that you can do without help in your own home.

Why might I need the home Epley maneuver?

You may need to try the home Epley maneuver if you have symptoms of BPPV. In BPPV, vertigo may come on with certain head movements. It may last for up to a minute. These symptoms may be more frequent at times. You may also have nausea and vomiting.

Often BPPV happens without any known cause. Sometimes there is a cause. Causes of BPPV can include:

- A head injury
- Problems after ear surgery

The home Epley maneuver is safe and inexpensive. It often works well to treat the symptoms of BPPV.

Your healthcare provider may suggest the home Epley maneuver if your health history and physical exam support that you have BPPV. Your healthcare provider may also suggest that you see a vestibular therapist for treatment.

Your healthcare provider may first do the original Epley maneuver in his or her office. He or she may teach you the home Epley maneuver. You may need to do the home Epley maneuver if you still have symptoms after you leave your healthcare provider's office. It may also be useful to know how to do this maneuver if your BPPV comes back after a few months or years.

What are the risks of home Epley maneuver?

The home Epley maneuver is safe. It may be helpful to have someone at home with you while you go through the movements. This can give you peace of mind in case your vertigo gets worse in the middle of the treatment.

People with health conditions that limit their ability to move may not be able to do the home Epley maneuver safely. These issues can include neck or back disease, vascular conditions, and retinal detachment. Ask your healthcare provider if the home Epley maneuver is safe for you.

How do I get ready for the home Epley maneuver?

You can do the home Epley maneuver on a bed. You start by sitting on the bed. You need to have a pillow in place so that when you lie back it will be under your shoulders.

What happens during the home Epley maneuver?

You may find it helpful to watch a video of the home Epley maneuver first. Or read a brochure with pictures.

Your healthcare provider will tell how often to do this procedure. He or she may ask you to do it 3 times a day until your symptoms have been gone for 24 hours. Your healthcare provider will also tell if your right or left ear is causing your symptoms.

Follow these steps if the problem is with your right ear:

- Start by sitting on a bed.
- Turn your head 45 degrees to the right.
- Quickly lie back, keeping your head turned. Your shoulders should now be on the pillow, and your head should be reclined. Wait 30 seconds.
- Turn your head 90 degrees to the left, without raising it. Your head will now be looking 45 degrees to the left. Wait another 30 seconds.
- Turn your head and body another 90 degrees to the left, into the bed. Wait another 30 seconds.
- Sit up on the left side.

Source: Johns Hopkins