



IS IT VERTIGO OR WILL IT GO AWAY ON ITS OWN?

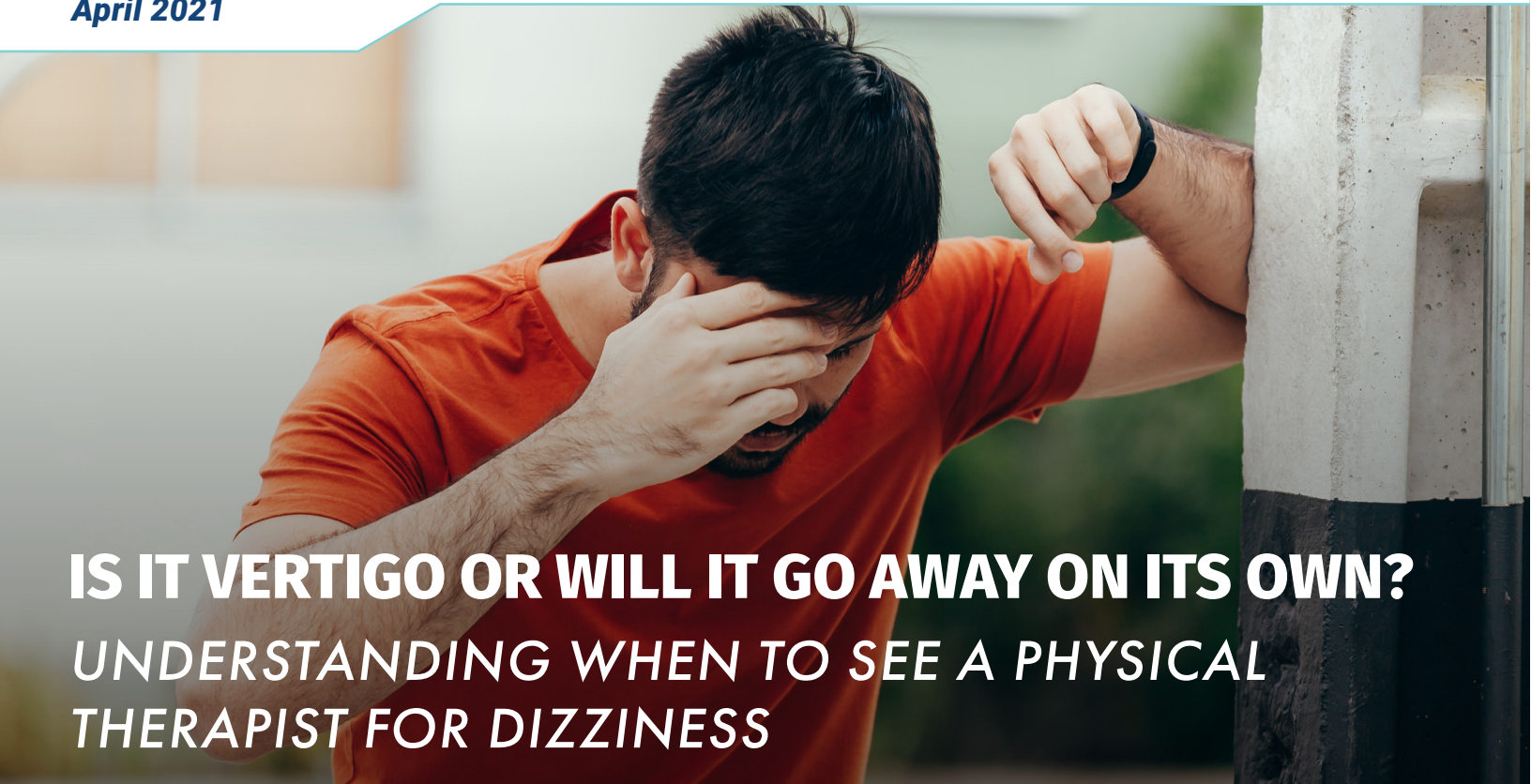
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UNDERSTANDING WHEN TO SEE A PHYSICAL THERAPIST FOR DIZZINESS



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IS IT VERTIGO OR WILL IT GO AWAY ON ITS OWN? UNDERSTANDING WHEN TO SEE A PHYSICAL THERAPIST FOR DIZZINESS

Do you find yourself getting dizzy doing everyday tasks, such as getting out of bed or walking down the driveway to get the mail? Do you find it hard to focus on one thing for long periods of time? Do you feel fatigued, lightheaded, or nauseous at any given time of the day? If so, some of these can be signs of a common head cold – but they can also be signs of vertigo.

A head cold, also referred to as the “common cold” is exactly that - it is one of the most common ailments people experience each year. On average, an adult will typically get 2-3 head colds a year. You know the feeling - stuffy nose, sore throat, dry cough, achiness... the overall feeling of wanting to stay in bed and drink herbal tea all day. Luckily, for head colds, that’s actually the best remedy! Most of these “common colds” will go away on their own (with a little relaxation and maybe a cough drop or two) within a week.

If your symptoms remain mild, it is best to just take time and let yourself heal at home, possibly with the aid of some DayQuil or another nose-throat-and-cough syrup that you can purchase at your local convenience store. However, if your fatigue becomes severe, you begin feeling nauseous, or you start experiencing an overwhelming feeling of dizziness or imbalance, there is a chance you could have vertigo. If so, our physical therapists at Full Potential Physical Therapy can help relieve your symptoms.

WHAT IS VERTIGO?

Before you can determine whether or not you have vertigo, as opposed to a head cold that will go away on its own, it is important to understand

what exactly it is. People who experience vertigo typically report an overwhelming sensation of feeling “off balance.” It can make someone feel dizzy, which can lead to nausea, tunnel vision, or even fainting spells. Imagine standing still and feeling as if the rest of the world is spinning around you – remember those fun-houses with the uneven floors you used to go in as a kid? That’s essentially what vertigo feels like. But what exactly causes it?

The most common causes of vertigo are:

- **BPPV** – also known as “benign paroxysmal positional vertigo.” While this sounds like a scary, long-winded prognosis, it is essentially an inner-ear infection. This type of infection occurs when microscopic calcium particles called “canaliths” clump up in the inner ear canals. Your inner ear is responsible for sending gravitational messages to your brain regarding the movements of your body. This is how we remain balanced on a daily basis. When the inner ear canals are blocked, the correct messages are unable to make it to the brain, and we become unbalanced – thus, causing vertigo.
- **Meniere’s Disease** – this is a disorder of the inner ear. It is caused by a buildup of fluid and fluctuating pressures within the ear. It has the same effect as BPPV, as the fluid and pressure will block messages from the inner ear canal to the brain, resulting in imbalance. Meniere’s Disease can cause long episodes of vertigo, in addition to tinnitus, commonly referred to as “a ringing of the ears,” and even hearing loss in extreme cases.

(Continued inside)

HOW CAN PT HELP MY DIZZINESS?

• **Vestibular neuritis** – also known as “labyrinthitis.” Again, this sounds much scarier than it is. It is another inner ear infection, which is typically viral. It causes the inner ear and surrounding nerves to become inflamed, resulting, again, in difficulties with balance due to discrepancies regarding gravitational brain messages. This is how vertigo begins.

As you can see, the most common causes of vertigo are due to issues with the inner ear. However, some less common causes of vertigo can include:

- Injury to the head or neck
- Stroke
- Migraines
- Brain tumor
- Medication.

The most common symptoms of vertigo are:

- **Dizziness** – this is the most commonly reported symptom of vertigo, also referred to as swaying, spinning, tilting, or even the sensation of being pulled to one direction.
- **Nystagmus** – this is the phenomenon of experiencing uncontrollable eye movements, commonly referred to as “eye jerks.”
- **Tinnitus** – this is commonly referred to as “a ringing of the ears.”

Other symptoms of vertigo can include:

- Headaches
- Sweating
- Nausea
- Fainting
- Vomiting
- Hearing loss
- Fatigue

HOW WE CAN HELP:

It can undoubtedly be difficult to determine when to seek treatment for something. It is true that vertigo can sometimes go away on its own, but it can also progress and result in worsening symptoms over time.

Why would you want to take the risk? If you believe you may have the symptoms of vertigo or one of its causes, it is important to consult with a doctor immediately.

Physical therapy is a common treatment for vertigo, and our therapists at Full Potential Physical Therapy are trained to help alleviate any dizzying, lightheaded, or physically unstable symptoms you may be experiencing.

The most common treatments for vertigo are:

- **Vestibular rehabilitation** – this form of physical therapy focuses on the vestibular system, located within the inner ear, and the ways in which we can strengthen it. The vestibular system sends gravitational messages to your brain about your body movements, and focusing on balance-specific exercises can help in strengthening this system, thus diminishing the effects of vertigo.
- **Canalith repositioning maneuvers** – this form of physical therapy focuses on treatment-specific head and body movements for BPPV patients. These exercises help in moving the calcium deposits out of the inner ear canal to alleviate blockage and allow gravitational messages to be more easily received by the brain. As the blockage shrinks, the symptoms of vertigo will lessen.

If you believe you may be experiencing vertigo, contact Full Potential Physical Therapy today. We'll provide relief for all of your dizzying symptoms.



Full Potential
PHYSICAL THERAPY

Has your pain come back? We can help! Call us at 616-392-2172 to book your appointment today!

Healthy Recipe

SPRING PEA PASTA



INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound pasta
- 3–4 c fresh peas
- 5 scallions, thinly sliced
- 1 shallot, very finely diced
- 1 c chopped fresh mint
- 1 c chopped Italian parsley
- ½ c olive oil
- 2 lemons – zest and ¼ c juice
- 2 c fresh pea shoots
- 1 tsp salt, plus more to taste
- ½ tsp pepper
- 1 tbsp truffle oil
- Optional- goat cheese crumbles

DIRECTIONS

Boil pasta in a generous amount of salted water according to directions. While the pasta is cooking, prep the rest of the ingredients. Chop the scallions, shallots and herbs. Zest two lemons, and measure out ¼ cup lemon juice. Once the pasta is just about done, add the peas to the boiling pasta water and blanch for one minute, or just until bright green. Immediately drain, place pasta and peas in a large bowl, drizzle with olive oil, lemon juice and season with 1 tsp salt and ½ tsp pepper. Toss in the pea shoots and add the scallions, shallot, herbs and lemon zest. Stir. Taste, adjusting salt and lemon juice, adding more of both, if necessary. Drizzle with truffle oil and serve immediately.

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Who Do You Know That Needs Our Help?



Full Potential
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10 REASONS WHY PEOPLE DON'T GO TO PHYSICAL THERAPY

As you can imagine, we have heard a lot of excuses as to why people don't go to physical therapy. We decided to compile the top 10 excuses, and break down exactly why they're false.

1. "I don't have the time."

It's a misconception that physical therapy consists of 2-3 visits to the therapist a week for hours each visit for months on end. Many also may think that they will be given exercise routines that will take hours a day. Neither is true. A patient's condition and deficits determine what is needed. The right mindset is to fully handle the pain and the reason for the pain, so you can return to full activity. We want you to graduate from PT and get back to life. That is our goal.

2. "I'll just wait for pain to go away."

Many people take the approach that if they ignore it the problem will go away. This unfortunately, usually never works. Not only do problems that subside often return, but people who compensate for existing problems often have secondary issues that arise. This approach leads to missed opportunities and usually more expense and time.

3. "It's too expensive."

People often think they don't have or want to spend the money on physical therapy. PT is a much cheaper alternative to expensive surgeries, medications, braces or supports, and return trips to the chiropractor or massage therapist. Remember, you are investing in yourself and your future. If you learn how to handle your problem and prorate it over the years of benefit, it's quite reasonable and actually is more of an investment v. a cost. An investment continues to pay you dividends through time and PT has the potential to do this if you do your program regularly.

4. "Surgery or medication are my only options."

PT has shown to reduce or eliminate the need for surgeries, medications or injections, and of these 3 options, PT is the only one that is non-invasive and has no side effects. Handling body problems as they arise can prevent ending up with your only option being surgery and rectifying the cause of the problem is a game changer to avoid surgeries due to premature joint wear.

5. "Physical therapy is painful."

PT is sometimes referred to as "Pain and Torture." This is a misnomer. The goal of PT is to return people to their proper movement patterns, and this can only be done by reducing or eliminating pain. PT that is painful either means your therapist is using too much force or you may have a "frozen" or adhered joint which does require more intensity of effort but is not torture.

6. "I'll just take care of the problem myself (or use stretches I found on the internet)."

The internet can be a great thing, or a very dangerous thing.

There is a lot of bad or misleading information out there. And even the good info can be bad if used for the wrong condition. You should be evaluated by a licensed physical therapist prior to starting exercise or stretching for any injury or problem. A body is a valuable thing, it has to last a long time; give it the best chance to get better by working with a professionally trained therapist.

7. "I need to go to my doctor to get a prescription for PT."

This one depends a little on state regulations and an individual's insurance if they choose to use it. Michigan law allows a patient to come to PT without a script, but only Priority Health Insurance allows us to bill for services. Best advice, call us and let's talk it over.

8. "PT is only for after surgery or accidents."

PT is not only used after surgery or accidents. It is also for any movement dysfunction. Overuse or chronic type injuries are greatly helped with PT, and PT is often a great way to prevent future injury. Overuse/chronic injuries are where we excel because we look deep to find why this is an ongoing problem.

9. "I'll just go to my chiropractor to get adjusted."

If you keep going out of alignment isn't there a reason why? Physical therapists are experts in the evaluation and treatment of movement dysfunction of the musculoskeletal system. They will help you get to the cause of your pain and help fix the problem.

10. "PT is just a bunch of exercise."

Physical therapists actually use manual techniques and modalities along with exercise to help people maximize their function. Manual techniques are key initially but yes, exercise ultimately is the key to long-term results where the patient is empowered to full understanding and ability to help himself.

Again, the process often goes like this: **1.** Obtain pain relief, **2.** Resolve the source of the problem/pain, **3.** Develop a functional exercise program to return to the desired activity. **4.** Educate the patient on their problem and their home exercise program.

All four together produce a future more in your control. What most people want is control over their bodies. PT gives personal control, not meds, not injections, not adjustments. Those may all have their place in the recovery process, but ultimately most people want personal control. We want to treat people who are interested in having personal control over their body.

Do you have a question about an ongoing problem? Give us a call at 616-392-2172 and talk to a Physical Therapist today!



SOME THOUGHTS ON BALANCE

Balance relates to our ability to control our body in space as we move through our day. Each step you take has an element of balance in it. To see for yourself, just walk more slowly with more of a marching motion to feel how single-leg stance is more difficult than walking at a normal speed.

Balance along with motion, strength and endurance make up the basic musculoskeletal qualities one would like to maintain through time. Unfortunately, balance really does follow the basic body rule of, "If you do not use it you will lose it." It does slowly decline over time if we do not challenge regularly. The adult world typically gets flatter, more in shoes and is less varied than a child's world, so our balance response gets less efficient as it is not challenged. Poor balance responses in people can cause severe problems with injuries like fractures or concussions when they fall; so, balance exercises can help prevent a whole painful detour in life.

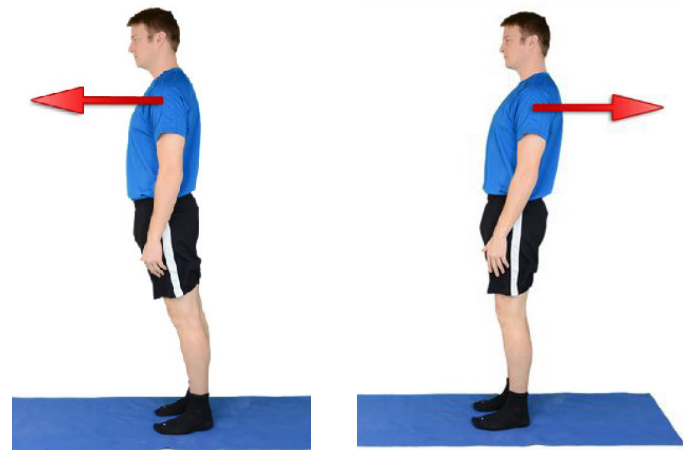
Balance has a great deal to do with the rapidity of nerve communication to the target muscles to respond to a balance challenge like walking on uneven ground or a sudden slip. The body's joint system works in three dimensions – laterally or left to right, rotational and forward-to-back. There are muscles that function to control each direction of movement so one stays in control under different circumstances.

The exercise depicted in our newsletter shows a simple "sway" challenge to one's balance. This is working on the forward to back direction of control. Many of us, as we get older, more easily lose our balance in this direction. This is due to our body's center of gravity moving forward as a result of weight gain, postural changes and weakness. This would be an easy exercise to start doing to help stimulate the quick response needed to control one's body better as it moves with daily actions.

Start with the control going forward first and have a railing or counter there if needed for safety to stop you since people tend to go too far. As you go forward keep your heels on the ground and move through the ankles, this will stimulate reactions in your calves, toe muscles and hips. Toes play a big role in the balance reaction.

When you do the backward motion, put yourself next to a wall behind you as this is a little tricky too and to be safe, have the wall there to catch you depending on how poor your balance is. The key with both directions is to stay in control of your movement, so start easy at first and work to greater degrees of movement. You can do these anywhere, washing some dishes, brushing one's teeth, or waiting next to the gas pump. Make it a part of your day and you will soon be a master of the sway.

EXERCISE ESSENTIALS:



Balance | Ankle Strategy

Stand with good posture. Sway backwards and forwards keeping your knees and hips straight. Maintain your balance by using your ankles. Sway for 30 seconds. Rest. Repeat 5 times.

VERTIGO SUCCESS STORY



"I am able to catch myself again!"

"I am not as uneasy when turning, and able to catch myself more readily if I begin to tip over. I definitely need to be more forgiving of myself when I work on a challenge, and to learn how fatigue affects my balance." – Anthony Z.