

A comparison of two home exercises to treat vertigo

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A CU School of Medicine researcher who suffers from benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV) and had to "fix it" before she could go to work one day was using a maneuver to treat herself that only made her sicker. "So I sat down and thought about it and figured out an alternate way to do it. Then I fixed myself and went in to work" and discovered a new treatment for this type of vertigo.

More than seven million people in the U.S. can expect to have benign paroxysmal positional vertigo, a common vertigo disorder, especially as they age. The disorder causes more than a quarter of the vertigo experienced worldwide and has a [lifetime prevalence](#) of 2.4 percent. This type of vertigo is unusual because it is a purely mechanical disorder in which particles used to sense gravity accidentally enter the spinning-motion sensors of the ear. The symptoms can be relieved by [maneuvers](#) that relocate these particles. After treatment there is a tendency for this accidental particle entry to recur, and treatment is needed each time this happens.

Carol Foster, MD associate professor in the department of Otolaryngology at the University of Colorado School of Medicine devised a new exercise, the Half Somersault Maneuver. It can be used as an alternative to the more common Epley maneuver.

The Epley maneuver is one that is applied by a physician or physical therapist and can be used at home and is effective in approximately 90 percent of cases but these exercises can be hard to self-apply, because

they cause severe [vertigo](#) during the exercise and require a precise sequence of head movements that usually require an assistant. During these maneuvers, there is also a risk that the particles can be moved into other spinning sensors, resulting in an increase in symptoms rather than improvement.

"The Half Somersault Maneuver however reduces this risk while allowing the [particles](#) to be quickly relocated without the need for an assistant. Our research team compared the Epley maneuver to the Half Somersault Maneuver when used as a home exercise. Both exercises were able to relieve symptoms of the disease; patients reported less dizziness and had fewer complications when self-applying the Half Somersault Maneuver. Because the exercise is able to be performed by most people with the disease, its home use should result in considerable savings in health care costs both for consumers and health plans" Foster said.

More information: This study compares the two procedures and has been accepted and will be published in the new online open-access journal, *Audiology and Neurotology EXTRA*, a subjournal of the prestigious Karger publication, *Audiology and Neurotology*.

Provided by University of Colorado Denver

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