

Keep the World From Spinning

Mark Netzing, PT
Physical Therapist
Isanti Physical Therapy

If you're lucky, you've never experienced a bout of vertigo. But for the rest of us, we know the misery it brings. Millions of people suffer from vertigo each year. Generally it is not a sign of serious illness and stems from an inner ear dysfunction. However, severe vertigo can be associated with more serious problems.

Vertigo is the sensation of movement or room spinning. It is not to be misunderstood for dizziness, which is a faint feeling or a feeling of poor balance. Vertigo associated with an inner ear problem can be readily alleviated with a simple maneuver. What happens is a tiny rock, called an otolith, inside your ear gets misaligned and causes your brain to think the room is spinning. Imagine a patch of tiny hairs which have a jelly type substance on their tops. Inside the jelly lay tiny rocks, or otoliths. When you move your head left, the tiny rocks move left and bring the hairs with them via the jelly substance. This signals your brain that you are turning left. If one of those rocks were to separate itself out of the jelly substance it would fall to the bottom of the hair cluster and sit/bend the hair cells continuously in one direction. This causes constant feedback to the brain saying the body is turning or spinning when in fact you are sitting still. So to correct this all you have to do is get the rock back into the jelly substance. This can be done by a simple maneuver performed by a qualified health care professional. Physical therapists are among those qualified to treat such disorders. Contact us with any questions at Andover Physical Therapy (763) 433-8108, Ham Lake Physical Therapy (763) 413-0880, Isanti Physical Therapy (763) 444-8680, or St. Francis Physical Therapy (763) 753-8804.