

Cooking with a Vestibular Disorder



Why is cooking difficult?



- End of the day fatigue
- Stress
- Difficult head positions
- Body & head turns
- Other people in the kitchen
- Bright lights

Concepts



- Relearn body movements
- Relearn head movements
- Postural Retraining
- Taking breaks, preventing fatigue
- Changing the environment

Posture



- Posture is all about movement - never forget to move out of static postures

Movement Retraining



- Remember to change positions
- Practice hard movements outside of the task
- Practice hard movements daily and in small 'doses' until they're easier.

POSTURE

is all about movement



HOW TO GET INTO 'GOOD' POSTURE

The classic good posture we hear about means all your joints should be stacked. Your ears over shoulders, shoulders over hip joints, hips over knees, and knees over ankles.

If you hung a plumb line, you would line up with the line.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS POSITION?

We should be able to get into this position if we need to but shouldn't maintain it throughout the whole day.

Between moving postures, for grounding, and to check to be sure you can get into this position.



POSTURE

is all about movement



STAND AGAINST THE WALL

Can your heels, bottom, shoulders, upper back, and head touch the wall simultaneously?

Are you able to tuck your chin?

WHAT IS A CHIN TUCK?

A chin tuck is a very small exercise using the smallest muscles of your neck.

Think of how a chicken's head moves, its head moves straight forward and backward. It doesn't look up or down.

The big muscles on the front of your neck should NOT be activated during this moment. It should only be the small muscles deep in your neck.

Your head should not look up or down. Pull it straight back toward the wall.

CHIIN ELONGATED

CHIN TUCKED



MOVEMENTS

that help in the kitchen



RIGHT & LEFT HEAD TURNS

Stand with feet hip-width apart and turn your head slowly right and left. Repeat 8-10 times.

UP & DOWN HEAD TURNS

Stand with feet hip-width apart and turn your head slowly up and down. Repeat 8-10 times

HEAD DOWN RIGH & LEFT TURNS

Stand with feet hip-width apart and tilt your head down. Turn your head slowly right and left. Repeat 8-10 times

FORWARD BEND: CHIN TUCKED

Stand with feet hip-width apart and tuck your chin. Bend forward at the hips, then slowly stand back up. Repeat 8-10 times

FORWARD BEND: HEAD RIGHT & LEFT

Stand with feet hip-width apart and tuck your chin. Bend forward at the hips, turn your head right and left, then slowly stand back up. Repeat 8-10 times

RULE OF THUMB

All vestibular exercises and movement practice should make you feel mildly off, but should not make you feel uncomfortable for the rest of the day.

These are to practice regularly to make the kitchen easier in the long run.

MOVEMENTS

that help in the kitchen



FORWARD BEND: HEAD UP & DOWN

Stand with feet hip-width apart and tuck your chin. Bend forward at the hips, turn your head up & down, then slowly stand back up straight.

Repeat 8-10 times.

RIGHT & LEFT BODY TURNS

Stand with feet hip-width apart and turn all the way to the right.

If spinning all the way in one direction is too difficult start with 90* turns, then 180*, then 270*, then a full 360.

Repeat 1-2 times

HEAD AND BODY OPPOSITE DIRECTION

Turn your head right, but spin your body left. Stop and perform grounding.

Repeat the opposite direction

Repeat 1-2 times on each side.

VORX₁

Stand with feet hip-width apart and put your thumb out in front of you. Stare at your thumb, shake your head right and left quickly. It should be challenging but your thumb should not move.

Repeat for 15-30s at a time.

*use a metronome to keep the beat, at least 120BPM, no more than 240BPM.

RULE OF THUMB

All vestibular exercises and movement practice should make you feel mildly off, but should not make you feel uncomfortable for the rest of the day.

These are to practice regularly to make the kitchen easier in the long run.

FUNCTIONAL

movements in the kitchen



TAKE BREAKS

There is no need to rush through cooking a meal. Do some of the cooking, then sit in a chair and rest for 1-5 minutes, then stand up and continue.

Some meals take longer than others, so take more breaks - remember that this is okay and that your stamina will build.

KEEP YOUR HEAD MOVING

Your head statically looking down is not helpful for you. Your head wants to move. If you're stirring or chopping, it's recommended that you do some chopping, then lift your head, then return to chopping. Try and maintain good posture otherwise.

For instance, you will want to keep your knees, hips, shoulders, and back in the posture we referenced earlier, but let your head tilt down toward the cutting board or stove.

OTHER TIPS

- If you're short, stand on a sturdy stool so your shoulders don't end up by your head.
- Stretch your head afterward
- Wear comfortable shoes