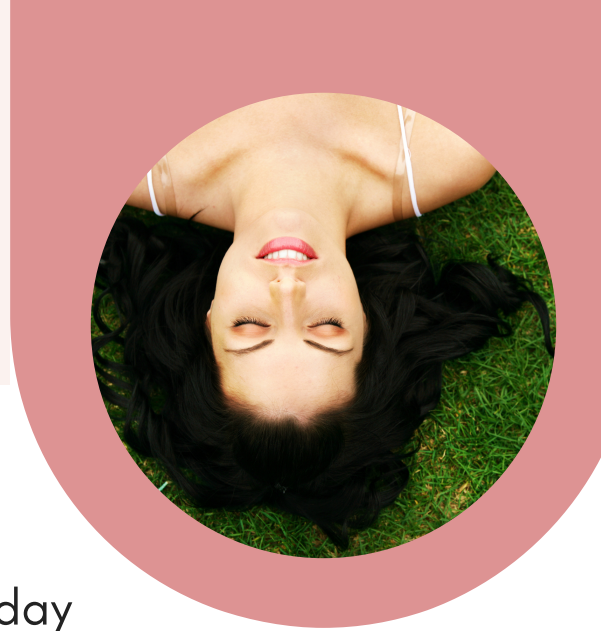


LAYING FLAT

WITHOUT VESTIBULAR SYMPTOMS



Why does laying flat cause symptoms?

- Vestibular fatigue at the end of the day
- The vestibular system not understanding where it is in space
- Anxiety from a history of BPPV
- Having active BPPV (this is different, though!!)

Exercises

- Grounding & mindfulness
- Diaphragmatic breathing
- Having a Mantra
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Slowly reducing the number of pillows in use

Other

- A [weighted blanket](#) to increase proprioception
- General vestibular exercises and system integration

LYING FLAT



IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

You cannot trigger or cause BPPV by laying flat

Practicing avoidance by sleeping at an incline can make your dizziness worse over time from anxiety & cervicogenic dizziness

The internal rocking and swaying motion when lying flat comes from a vestibular mismatch and can be treated with the following movements

THE COMPONENTS:

Vestibular Strengthening

Improving your vestibular-brain connection to enhance each one's understanding of where you are in space.

Neuroplasticity

The brain's ability to change, learn, and relearn.

WHAT WE WILL COVER

Reducing the number of pillows
How to lay flat
Progressive muscle relaxation
Why proprioception matters

WHAT IS A GOOD SLEEPING POSITION?



When you're sleeping, you should be in a neutral position. The neutral position would be the position that you would consider 'good posture'

it should have your head in line with your shoulders, in line with your hips, knees, and feet. Whether you're a side sleeper or a back sleeper, this should apply. That's why it's so important to be able to lay flat.

Something to consider if you have neck pain while sleeping is neck support or a [cervical pillow](#) or [neck bolster](#) to add to your pillow. It's important to consider that these might not be good options for you if you are not yet sleeping flat because it could put your head and neck at an even stranger angle.

Your neck and cervical symptoms may be related to the position you sleep. Dr. Drew from the neck module has a great video on this, you can find it [linked here](#).

DECREASE THE NUMBER OF PILLOWS

If you can, try to reduce the number of pillows you use over time. this will help you to slowly get into a better posture.

Find a few flatter pillows around your house, instead of taking out a full pillow replace it with a flatter pillow so you are reducing the height more slowly.



THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPRIOCEPTION



A mattress is not a firm surface, however, the floor is, and laying on the floor often makes you feel dizzy, too.

You have three systems of balance; you can read about them [here](#). If all three (vision, proprioception, and vestibular) aren't working together, the way your body feels its surroundings can start to feel off all the time.

The three systems aren't integrating when this happens, and instead of working together, they work independently.

This means your proprioceptive system will tell your brain 'we are moving' when you're on an uneven surface, and there's no working together from the vestibular system to say 'no, we aren't moving, we are flat'.

This mismatch, paired with fatigue and other end-of-day difficulties makes being flat so hard.

Doing exercises like [grounding](#), [Romberg on foam](#), and other exercises with your vestibular therapist to reintegrate these systems can really help!



LYING FLAT



STEP 1:

Lay down in a position that mildly triggers your symptoms. This may mean being completely flat, or still at an incline. Find what that means for you. Then, find a focal point on the ceiling.

STEP 2:

Be completely aware of your symptoms. Don't judge them or yourself. Try to stay in control of yourself. Don't let the sensations take over your thoughts, feelings, or emotions (easier said than done, I know).

STEP 3:

Starting with your heels/feet, practice grounding and recite a mantra to yourself about being calm, safe, and still (see mindfulness worksheet from January).

STEP 4:

Repeat this mantra to yourself while working your way up your body to your head repeating the grounding process (feel your body part, feel your stillness, then move up the 'chain' toward your head).

STEP 5:

Repeat this process. Do this nightly on your way to sleep (unless it is stressful for you, then do it as an exercise during the day on the couch or floor instead of in bed so the bed doesn't become stressful). Repeat for 5-10 minutes/day. Lower yourself as it becomes easier.



PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION



STEP 1:

Lay down in a position that mildly triggers your symptoms. This may mean being completely flat, or still at an incline. Find what that means for you. Then, find a focal point on the ceiling.

STEP 2:

Be completely aware of your symptoms. Don't judge them or yourself. Try to stay in control of yourself. Don't let the sensations take over your thoughts, feelings, or emotions (easier said than done, I know). Now, begin diaphragmatically breathing (see January Module for Information here)

STEP 3:

Starting with your heels/feet, squeeze your foot muscles for a 4 count, breathe into your diaphragm, and then relax them completely. Then, move up the 'chain,' squeezing your calves and then relaxing. Repeat all the way up until you get to your head.

STEP 4:

When you're finished progressively contracting and relaxing your muscles, do a body scan. Do you feel better, worse, or the same? Do you feel more relaxed?

STEP 5:

Repeat this process. Do this nightly on your way to sleep (unless it is stressful for you, then do it as an exercise during the day on the couch or floor instead of in bed so the bed doesn't become stressful).

