

Lifestyle Modifications for Definite Vestibular Migraine

Research indicates adult patients that implement helpful lifestyle changes can improve symptoms associated with definite vestibular migraine. Four lifestyle areas seem to benefit patients: restful sleep, exercise, dietary trigger elimination, and mealtime regularity. All areas should be considered because different patients may have different areas that are most impactful for reducing their symptoms. Best outcomes occur for adults after following lifestyle modifications for at least 60 days. Continue to take all medications as prescribed by your doctors, as the recommendations listed do not replace medical management.

1: Getting restful sleep. We have determined people with dizziness and headaches will feel better if they get restful sleep. Tips for improving restful sleep:

- Follow a regular sleep schedule. Go to sleep and get up at the same time each day, even on weekends or when you are traveling.
- Develop a bedtime routine. Take time to relax before bedtime each night. Some people read a book, listen to soothing music, or soak in a warm bath.
- Use low lighting in the evenings and as you prepare for bed.
- Avoid napping in the late afternoon or evening. Naps may keep you awake at night.
- Keep your bedroom at a comfortable temperature, not too hot or too cold.
- Most people prefer the bedroom to be as quiet as possible, but others sleep better with soothing sounds from a noise machine.
- Try not to watch television or use your computer, cell phone, or tablet in the bedroom. The light from these devices may make it difficult for you to fall asleep.
- Alarming or unsettling shows or movies, like horror movies, may also keep you awake.
- Avoid eating large meals close to bedtime—they can keep you awake.
- Exercise at regular times each day but not close to your bedtime.
- Stay away from caffeine. Caffeine (found in coffee, tea, soda, and chocolate) can keep you awake.
- Remember—alcohol won't help you sleep. Even small amounts make it harder to stay asleep.

Adapted from <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/good-nights-sleep#good>

2: Regular exercise. People with dizziness and headaches will feel better if they complete some type of exercise every day:

- Speak with your physicians before starting any formal program of exercise.
- If you are already regularly participating in an exercise program that is great.
- Keep in mind that exercise that is too rigorous can cause migraine activity in some people. It is unknown if this is also true for vestibular migraine.
- If you do not exercise regularly then you may consider a sample walking program adapted from the National Institutes of Health:

		Pace	Minutes	Days per Week
Month 1	Week 1	Slow	10	4
	Week 2	Slow	10	4
	Week 3	Slow	15	4
	Week 4	Slow-Brisk	20	5
Month 2	Week 5	Brisk	25	5
	Week 6	Brisk	30	5
	Week 7	Brisk	35	5
	Week 8	Brisk	35	5

Additional information on walking for exercise is found here: <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/walking-stepright-direction>

3: Food/Drink Dietary trigger elimination. People with dizziness and headaches feel better if they do not eat or drink any of these foods or beverages:

- Alcohol (not just red wine – no alcohol)
- Artificial sweeteners/flavor enhancer (Aspartame, monosodium glutamate - MSG)
- Avocado (also no figs, raisins, papaya, passion fruit, or red plums)
- Beans (broad, fava, garbanzo, lima, navy, pinto, pole; snow peas)
- Caffeine
- Canned Soup, bouillon cubes, soup base with yeast or MSG
- Cheese, buttermilk, sour cream
- Chocolate, cocoa
- Cured/Aged meats (ham, bologna, pepperoni, bacon, salami, sausage)
- Hot dogs
- Non-white vinegars
- Nuts (including nut butters)
- Pickled (including olives), fermented and marinated foods
- Soda
- Yeast (breads with yeast, doughnuts)

4: Eating at the same time daily. People with dizziness and headaches will feel better if they eat at the same time every day.

- Skipping or missing meals may cause symptoms in 40-56% of people with migraine
- Plan ahead so that you can fuel your body with appropriate foods at the same time each day
- Don't eat or drink any of the items on the avoid list

Research in this area is ongoing. Continue to communicate with your doctor regarding your progress and continue discussion about the best way to manage your symptoms.

Feel Better!