

TIPS TO PREVENT EYE STRAIN

Eye strain is a very common problem. Whether it is from working on a computer, watching TV, driving for long period of time, your eyes can become fatigued and lose focus. Serious eye strain can cause numerous problems - short term head and neck aches to long term conditions like Myopia (light entering the eye focuses in front of the retina and distant objects cannot be seen sharply). Below is a list of things you can do to help reduce and prevent eye strain.

Take Breaks

The best way to prevent eye strain is to not over use them.

- Shift your focus from near to far on a regular basis – from close up to at least 20 feet away.
- While working on a computer look away from the monitor at least every ten minutes.
- If you are driving check your speedometer every so often.

Reduce Glare

Reducing glare will dramatically reduce the strain on your eyes.

- Use non-reflective interface whenever possible (reading from a hard copy instead of a computer screen)
- Make sure computer screen is at a 90 degree angle from direct light source.
- Use indirect or reflective lighting whenever possible.
- Try switching your monitor or TV to a flat screen (they are not as reflective).
- Use anti-glare filters on monitors.
- Use anti-glare glasses when driving (especially at night).

Adjust Contrast

Ensure there is good contrast with what you are looking at, but reduce contrast for periphery (the surface of the object).

- More contrast makes edges more discernible (eyes don't have to focus as much), but too much contrast will cause strain.
- Keep lighting levels at moderate levels.
- Use task lighting to aid eyesight for specific tasks.
- Adjust the contrast on monitors and screens for the best effect.
- Use glasses or sunglasses with polarized lenses (they increase contrast and cut down on glare).
- Use reading glasses.
- A dark screen is better than a bright, white screen.

Lighting

It is best to use full spectrum lighting, like sun light whenever possible. If sunlight is not possible use one of the below options.

- Use a combination of florescent and incandescent lighting.
- Use full spectrum florescent bulbs.
- Use table lamps whenever possible.
- Make sure the lighting in the room is about equal to the brightness of the display.

Strengthen your eyes

Eye strain is actually the strain on the muscles controlling the eyes. Strengthening these muscles with a series of eye exercises will prevent eye strain.

- Close your eyes tightly for 5 seconds and then open them – repeat 5 or 6 times.
- Lightly press a warm washcloth to your eyes once in a while is also a good idea.
- Get lots of rest.
- Eat foods containing vitamin A (carrots are a good source).