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Computer Vision Syndrome



Computer Eyestrain:

Computers have become an indispensable part of everyday life both at work and for personal use. Yet, for many people this also means experiencing eyestrain, a sign that your eyes are fatigued from overuse. Fortunately, the symptoms are usually temporary and not indicative of eye damage. Even better, there are things you can do to reduce or prevent eye discomfort.

Common Symptoms:

- Tired or itching eyes
- red, watery or dry eyes
- blurry vision
- headache
- discomfort when shifting focus between the monitor and your paper documents
- color fringes or afterimages when you look away from the monitor
- Increased sensitivity to light

What You Can Do:

- Take frequent breaks to give your eyes a rest. A five-minute break every hour is a good rule of thumb. Move around or just close your eyes for a few moments.
- Try blinking more frequently to lubricate your eyes or use artificial tears. People tend to blink less frequently when working at a computer, which can lead to dry eyes.
- Make sure your eyeglass or contact lenses prescription is right for computer work. You may benefit from a prescription that is geared specifically for your work situation.
- Position your monitor so that the top of the screen is at the same level as your eyes or slightly below, and at a distance of approximately 25 inches. Many people find that putting the screen at arm's length is a good rule of thumb.
- Place your keyboard directly in front of your monitor. If it's at an angle or to the side, your eyes have to focus at different distances from the screen, which can cause visual discomfort.
- Use a document holder beside your monitor and at the same level, angle and distance from your eyes as the monitor. This way your eyes will not have to constantly readjust.
- Adjust lighting. Bright light can make it difficult to see the screen and also strain your eyes. To minimize exterior light, close windows, blinds and shades. Consider reducing or eliminating indoor overhead lights and use an adjustable desk lamp. Position the lamp so that the light does not shine on the computer screen or in your eyes.
- Reduce glare. You can check for glare by looking at the monitor when it is off so that you can see reflected light and images. The worst glare is generally from sources above or behind you such as fluorescent lights and sunlight.
- Position your monitor so that the brightest light sources are off to the side, at a right angle to your monitor. And, avoid placing your monitor directly in front of a window or white wall.
- Adjust the contrast and brightness levels of your computer screen so that it's comfortable for you. A glare-reducing screen on the monitor can also help.

- Keep your computer screen free from dust by wiping it down regularly. Dust can reduce contrast and may contribute to glare and reflection problems.
- Use proper posture. This includes a tucked in chin, slight curve at the neck rather than a forward head and neck, a straight upper back with only a slight roundedness, and hollow in the low back.
- Avoid sitting in front of an air conditioner facing its air draft while working on computer.
- By making a few simple adjustments, you can keep your eyes rested and ready. However, if eye problems persist, see your eye doctor as this could be a sign of a more serious problem.