

Computer Comfort: Managing Digital Eye Strain



Digital Eye Strain

Digital eye strain, also known as computer vision syndrome (CVS), is a group of problems that result from prolonged use of digital devices including computers, tablets, e-readers and cellphones.

In some cases, those who do not wear glasses for other daily activities may benefit from glasses prescribed specifically for computer use. Many already wearing glasses may find that their current prescription does not provide optimal vision for viewing a computer or other digital devices.

Most common symptoms associated with CVS:

- eyestrain
- dry eyes
- headaches
- fatigue
- blurred vision
- neck and shoulder pain

These symptoms may be caused by:

- poor lighting
- uncorrected vision problems
- glare on a digital screen
- reduced blink rate
- improper viewing distances
- a combination of these factors
- poor seating posture

Tips for Healthy, Comfortable Vision at the Computer: Don't take a vision problem to work.

Even if you don't need glasses for driving, reading or other activities, you still may have a minor vision problem that is aggravated by computer use. You may need a mild lens prescription to reduce vision stress on the job, reduce fatigue and keep you comfortable for the entire work day.

Make sure your glasses meet the demands of your job.

If you wear glasses for distance, vision, reading or both, they may not provide the most efficient vision for viewing your computer screen, which is about 20 to 30 inches from your eyes. Tell your optometrist about your job tasks and measure your on-the-job sight distances. You may benefit from one of the lens designs made specifically for computer work.

Minimize discomfort from blue light and glare.

Blue light from LED and fluorescent lighting as well as monitors, tablets and mobile devices can negatively affect your vision over the long term. Special lens enhancements can reduce the harmful impact of blue light. Minimize glare on your computer screen by using a glare reduction filter, repositioning your screen, or using drapes, shades or blinds. Also, keep your screen clean as dirt and fingerprints increase glare and reduce clarity.

Check the ergonomics of your workstation.

When using computers, keep your feet planted on the floor and the computer screen slightly below eye level. Make sure you maintain a comfortable, upright posture. See the diagram above for what an optimal work station looks like.

Use an adjustable copy holder.

Place reference material at the same distance from your eyes as your computer screen and as close to the screen as possible. That way your eyes won't have to change focus when looking from one to the other.

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Don't forget to blink!

Studies show that looking at a computer screen causes the average number of blinks per minute to decrease by 60% or more and also increases the amount of incomplete blinks you make. This leaves the front surface of the eye open to dryness and irritation. Talk to your optometrist to determine the treatment that would work best for you.

Keep cell phones and tablets at arm's length.

The closer the device is to your eyes, the harder your visual system has to work to make things clear. Sustaining this increased amount of focusing contributes to headaches and eye strain with prolonged use.

Take alternative task breaks throughout the day.

Make phone calls or photocopies. Consult with co-workers. After working on your computer for an extended period of time, do anything in which your eyes don't have to focus on something up close. A good rule of thumb is the 20/20/20 Rule: Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds. This gives your eyes a much needed break and a chance to relax.

Remember to limit screen time for your little ones.

The best thing for growth and development is movement and play!

Which solutions are best for you?

Glasses prescribed to meet the unique visual demands of computer viewing may be needed to ensure optimal comfort and function. Special lens designs, lens powers, lens tints or surface enhancements may help to maximize visual abilities and comfort.

Some computer users experience problems with eye focusing or eye coordination that can't be adequately corrected with eyeglasses or contact lenses. A program of vision therapy (VT) may be needed to treat these specific problems. VT is a structured program of activities prescribed to improve visual abilities. It trains the eyes and brain to work together more effectively. VT helps remediate deficiencies in eye movements, eye focusing and eye teaming and reinforces the eye-brain connection.

Ask your optometrist for more information or schedule a complimentary visual performance screening through Highline Center for Vision Performance: [720-870-2828](tel:7208702828)