

VisionNews

Vision Education Centre

339 Bloor St W #215 Toronto M5S 1W7 416-599-9202 email: elizabeth@visioneducators.com www.visioneducators.com

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Dear friends,

In June we had a very successful workshop at a beautiful location near King City. In September I am offering Part Two for those who took Part One and also for those who have taken previous classes and workshops with me. I look forward to an inspiring day. Please see the Class Schedule for details.

I am delighted to announce that I have been invited to be a speaker at the British Natural Eyesight Conference at Felden Lodge, a beautiful Conference and Training Centre near London England. It is being held from 24 - 26 October 2008. For details see www.bnec.org.uk.

People with an interest in natural vision education and people working in the field are invited to come to the beautiful setting to share technique and experience.

The theme of this year's conference is how the work pioneered by William Bates in the early 20th century is being developed and used today.

Inspiring and practical Natural Vision Workshops will be held before and after the conference. I do hope to see some of you there.

My very best wishes to each and every one of you!

Elizabeth Abraham

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'In re-describing [the techniques originated by Dr Bates and developed by his followers] I wish to show how they fit together in relation to the single principle - that the proper use of the eyes, leading to normal relaxed function, is achieved through balancing the elements of awareness, attention and acceptance, as expressed in the following three affirmations:

- **I am aware of my surroundings.**
- **I attend to one thing at a time, within my awareness.**
- **I accept unconditionally what I see.'**

From: *The Bates Method* by Peter Mansfield

PALMING

Palming is a very effective way to rest the entire visual system in order to help you see more clearly, and also to experience the feeling of relaxed eyes so that you are more aware of when you are straining your eyes during the day.

When the eyes are closed and covered with the palms of the hands, they no longer have to respond to light. Since there is less for them to do, it is possible for them to completely relax. However, although the physical aspect of Palming is very simple, the nervous system and the brain are also connected to the visual system, and it often takes some creativity and ingenuity to find ways in which to engage the mind in relaxation.

Since it is more difficult for the mind to relax if the body is uncomfortable, the first place to begin is to make sure you are comfortably supported. If there is no support under the elbows for instance, after some time the shoulders will probably become tense from having to hold up the weight of the arms. If you are sitting at a table, make sure the surface is built up with pillows or books so that your elbows are supported and your hands can be placed around your eyes without your head having to hang down into your hands.

If there is tension in your upper back and shoulders, your hands might fall asleep when Palming. If this is the case, make sure you do some movements to relax and stretch this part of your body in preparation.

If you are comfortable sitting on the floor with your back against a wall and your knees bent, your elbows will probably be comfortably supported on your knees. If not, put a pillow over your knees and rest your elbows on that.

When lying on your back to Palm, you can put a pillow over your chest and tuck it up into your armpits to support your arms. If you prefer to lie on your side with a pillow under your head, the underneath hand can cover your lower eye and a folded pillow between your arms will support your upper arm so that your other eye can be comfortably covered. Support is the key to comfort.

There are many stories of people who have palmed either for long periods or for short periods many times during each day, and whose vision difficulties have been completely alleviated. There are others, however, who derive only temporary benefit from the same practice. The difference is in the degree of mental relaxation that has been achieved. It is necessary for healing to take place at a deep level in order for vision to permanently improve and for that, the mind needs to be engaged.

In books about vision improvement, it is often recommended to imagine black objects in order to encourage a black visual field when Palming. This works beautifully for some people. Those with a great deal of tension in their eyes and mind however, often see colours and images appearing in their visual field, or patterns like 'snow' on a TV screen. When these people read about seeing black while Palming, they often try hard to see it, or become discouraged and think that they will never be successful. Both these responses of course, increase the tension.

When you are in a dark room with your eyes closed and covered by the palms to exclude any light, you will see black if your eyes and mind are relaxed. If however you see images dancing in front of your eyes it only means that your visual system is not yet relaxed. The task then, is to discover what might bring relaxation to your particular visual system. Remembering or imagining black objects or a black field in front of the eyes is only one way. If it does not help, it is best to work with other ideas.

People often find it helpful to think of Palming as a form of meditation, and to focus on their breath, or on a prayer or mantra. Each time the mind wanders onto everyday thoughts or concerns, they bring it gently back to their breath.

Others find it beneficial to remember or imagine seeing clearly in the mind's eye. They take themselves on a mini-vacation by remembering or imagining being in a beautiful place, engaged in enjoyable activities, being with people they like, while being relaxed and seeing clearly.

Some people find it engages and relaxes the mind to listen to music, a relaxation tape or an audio book while Palming.

Children often love telling stories when Palming or playing Pass the Story with parents or siblings. One young student of mine finds it most relaxing to see himself juggling in his mind's eye while he palms. Imagining movement while Palming keeps the mind engaged and prevents staring.

There are many benefits to Palming besides vision improvement. As the nervous system and the mind relax, sleep is deeper (I have one student who cured her insomnia by Palming), the digestion is better, the memory improves, and the list goes on.

HELP WANTED

Has Palming helped you? If so, please let me know what benefits you have experienced.

If you have found ways of Palming that work well for you and that you think would benefit others, I would very much appreciate it if you would email me and tell me about your techniques. I want to be able to help as many people as possible to benefit from this wonderful practice, and I am sure there are as many different ways of Palming as there are people who do it. If you send me your stories I can pass them on. Email: elizabeth@visioneducators.com

PRACTICING

By William H. Bates, MD

(From: *Better Eyesight* magazine, October 1922)

A great many people have asked, 'How much time should one devote to practicing the methods of central fixation [seeing best where one is looking] in order to be cured of imperfect sight without glasses?'

The answer is - ALL THE TIME.

One should secure relaxation or rest until one is perfectly comfortable and continue feeling comfortable as long as one is awake.

The feeling of relaxation or comfort can be obtained with the memory of perfect sight. Even if one cannot remember perfect sight one can imagine it. All black objects should be imagined perfectly black. All white objects observed should be imagined perfectly white. All letters observed should be imagined perfectly and everything that is seen should be imagined perfectly.

To imagine anything imperfectly requires a strain, an effort, which is difficult. Choose the easy way. Imagine things perfectly.

If you try to imagine an object as stationary you will strain and your sight become impaired. All day long the eyes are moving from one point to another. Imagine that objects are moving opposite to the movement of the eyes. If one does not notice this one is very apt to strain and imagine things stationary.

One can practice properly for ten minutes and be comfortable. That does not mean that all the rest of the day one can strain and tear one's eyes all to pieces without paying the penalty for breaking the law. If you are under treatment for imperfect sight be sure to keep in mind all day long from the time you wake up in the morning until you go to bed at night the feeling of comfort, of rest, of relaxation, incessantly. It is a great deal better to do that than to feel under a strain and be uncomfortable all day long.