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 search of clarity, we practice many activities to help our vision. Eventually, we learn to make taking care of ourselves and our eyes a moment by moment habit for life instead of something we only do when we practice.

For instance, I know that breathing deeply and blinking regularly are good for my well-being. I regularly practice various activities to help me breathe more deeply and blink with ease. With a shock, I realize how often I hold my breath during the day. I notice that this pattern happens whenever I am concentrating, whether it's on learning a new dance step, listening intently to a friend, trying to finish a project on time or reading an absorbing book.

I become curious about what might help me. I find that when I am in a potentially stressful situation it helps to remind myself regularly to sense into my body, breathe out fully and take regular breaks to do something else. After a while, I recognize the physical and mental signs of the stress pattern before it takes hold, and automatically start doing what is necessary to help myself stay focused and relaxed. My eyes feel better right away so I know I'm on the right track. I also notice that I work more effectively, dance with more ease, listen more deeply and like myself better. Bonus!

Sometimes I notice that I do not actually look at things, or that I look but it does not register. When this happens I have learned to slow down and look for things that give me pleasure. I love looking at the colour of the fall leaves against the blue sky. How about you?

With best wishes to each of you for a great fall season!

Elizabeth Abraham

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'One of the commonest examples of the effect of worry is demonstrated by children. Many times a child is able to read a story or use his eyes for hours at home without a headache because he is happy there, he feels secure, his mind is free from worry or fear. But let him use his eyes in a school that makes him anxious or for home work that is demanding from him something that he is afraid he cannot do, and he has a headache. This child needs attention and help with his school work, not a pair of glasses. Teach him to understand his work and enjoy the challenge of it - don't put glasses on him. His trouble is not eyes but fear.'

From *Sight Without Glasses* by Dr Harold Peppard (published in 1936)

HAPPY EYES FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES

Blurry vision and **tired eyes** are often a sign of strain. Adopting healthier vision habits helps restore balance to the eyes and mind. Here are a few ideas to explore:

1. If you or your children have difficulty reading signs in the distance or seeing the writing on the board, you might be suffering from the stress of sitting still every day while concentrating on close work. Make sure to look into the distance often as an antidote to the close work, and to keep your eyes moving and actively engaged rather than staring. If your eyes are tired, take a moment to close and rest them.

2. If you and your child often experience eye strain and headaches, perhaps your eyes are not working as well together as they might be. If this is the case, you can help them by doing an activity called the **Finger Gate**. Do it when watching television, as a break from reading, when you are a passenger in a car or at a stop light if you are the driver. Hold your finger up and line it up with an object in the distance. Look at the distant object and you will notice two fingers instead of one, with the distant object in between the two fingers. Then look at your finger and notice one finger centred between two of the distant object. It will work best if you relax, breathe and blink while playing this game. Alternate between looking at your finger and then at the far object several times and then close your eyes to rest them. Repeat this often during the day.

3. Sometimes restoring balance to the eyes and mind means doing fewer visually demanding tasks, building more 'down-time' into our lives, getting more physical exercise, spending more time with close friends and family, and having more fun. Many of us sit for hours during the day using our eyes, and then sit again in the evenings either in night classes or being entertained. Most of us need more time to assimilate all the new experiences of the day. Being outside in nature, puttering around the house, telling stories with family and friends or engaging in a hobby or sport just for the fun of it are valuable activities for the health of eyes, mind and spirit.

4. It is also important to establish a habit of **Palming** to rest the eyes when they are tired during the day, and also before bed. Sit or lie in a comfortable position, rub your hands together and place the cupped part of your palms over your closed eyes. While Palming, remember some fun things from the day, tell yourself or your companion a story, and listen to music, a book on CD, or the sound of your breathing.

MORE ABOUT CONNECTION

I think of vision as being just one of the many ways in which we connect with each other and with the world around us. Perhaps, when eyesight is not as clear as it was, it could be an opportunity to look at some of the ways we can establish more of a connection with our other senses.

When they first take off their glasses or wear a weaker prescription, many people complain that they cannot hear as well. Could this be a sign that they were more dependent on reading lips and facial expressions than they thought, or were they not really listening closely after all? Many of us are caught up in our own thoughts, feelings and reactions when other people are talking, and miss a lot of what is said.

What types of sounds do you most often choose to listen to? Are there certain tones of voice and particular sounds that you tune out without knowing it? Is it difficult for you to listen to the person talking to you, be aware of the sounds around you and of your own thoughts all at the same time?

It is also interesting to be curious about how we connect through our sense of ourselves in the space around us. We might be naturally focused on our inner process and not as aware of our surroundings, or we might be aware of things outside us and not as aware of ourselves in the space.

Some people find that when they first take their glasses off they bump into things. Is it because they really didn't see the object, or because they weren't paying attention? When we don't see as clearly we need to pay much more attention to everything around us as well as to our own sense of ourselves in space. It might be interesting to spend some time with a trusted friend while wearing a blindfold. As you move through your house can you 'see' the furniture in your mind's eye? As you walk along the street can you sense when you are coming to a lamp post or the wall of a building before you actually bump into it? As we open up awareness of the space around us we can connect to our environment in a new way.

If we were to change the way we connect with our sense of hearing, space, smell, touch and intuition, how do you think that might affect our vision and our vitality?

DR BATES ON STARING

To break the habit of staring:

1. Practice shifting consciously from one part to another of whatever object you are looking at, and imagine that it moves in the opposite direction to the movement of your eyes. Do this with letters on an eye chart, with words and letters in the book you are reading, and with other objects around you.

2. Close your eyes frequently for a moment or longer. If you feel considerable strain, keep your eyes closed for several minutes and then open them for a fraction of a second, flashing a quick glance at the object. Close again and repeat.

3. Imagine that the white openings and margins of letters are whiter than the rest of the background. Do this with eyes closed and open alternately. This practice prevents staring and improves the vision rapidly

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM VISION STUDENTS

(Thank you very much for your contributions. Please keep them coming!)

I've just come back from England. It was a great trip! I learned a great lesson. On the way to Halifax to meet my friend, I lost the pinhole glasses I carry around 'just in case' I need to see more clearly. I thought that the whole trip would be ruined because of this. I was worried that I wouldn't be able to see Stonehenge clearly or anything else on this once in a lifetime trip. I tried to find a source of pinhole glasses in Halifax, but to no avail. I couldn't back out of the trip, so I had to go on and hope for the best. I arrived in England and to my delight I discovered that I *could* see. My distance vision was a little fuzzy sometimes, but I noticed that it's all relative. I realize that I saw what I needed to see when I needed to see it. When I was really interested in what I was looking at I could see it. I could walk up close if I needed to or ask my traveling companion if I couldn't see it. When I was really tired things were a lot fuzzier but then I wasn't that interested anyway. It all worked out and it was wonderful sight*seeing*. I feel much more relaxed about my vision and I'm easier on myself. Wow!
D. S.

Since our last lesson I've been working at improving my vision on and off (or maybe the better phrase would be 'not working' at seeing), with great results. I recently purchased my 3rd pair of reduced glasses, roughly cutting my original prescription in half (Old: -6, -5; New: -3.75, -2.75). After an initial adjustment period, I'm happy to report that I can see quite clearly when relaxed and when I allow images to come to me as opposed to reaching out and grabbing them with my eyes. I'm thrilled! I'm spending a fair amount of time without the glasses, especially outside where it is easier to see with such abundant light. Looking forward to the day when I might be able to leave the glasses behind for good.
D. J.

Thank you so much for showing me this software! I have downloaded it on my mom's computer, and she's been telling me about how good it is when she's at work. I also find it's a great help when I do my homework. I am planning to mention it to many people I know for sure would like it.
E.L.

The software mentioned above is available at www.stressaway.com. It is a wonderful help for computer users and is now available for Mac as well as PC users. The software was developed by a Vision Educator!

REBOUNDERS

I highly recommend the Needak Soft-Bounce Rebounder. Rebounding helps improve circulation, digestion and elimination; detoxify the body; increase bone density; enhance visual acuity and improve joint mobility.

In Ontario contact Cherylin Gilad at 416-556-2950. For the rest of Canada: Beverley Ann Bazowski at 306-241-9861. The main website is www.needak-rebounders.com.