

Better Vision for the Future

OVERVIEW

Eye exercises have been used for many years and by many cultures to help maintain healthy vision. The eyes need to be exercised much like any other part of the body. Unfortunately, the increased use of computers, television viewing, near work both at school and on the job, has created chronic, excessive stress on our visual system. Our eyes and bodies were not designed to withstand this ongoing stress, which we believe contributes to poorer vision, eye disease, and often neck and back problems.

Is it little wonder that 75% of students in graduate school are nearsighted?

Eye exercises can strengthen eye muscles, help maintain flexible lenses and help maintain sharper vision with just 5-10 minutes each day. Just choose a few of the eye exercises to do during each session. People who spend hours on the computer each day, should take a 2-3 minute break each hour for eye exercises (palming is an excellent exercise to do each break).

This printout is divided into 3 sections:

- 1) *Basic eye exercises*,
- 2) *Acupressure eye massage*,
- 3) *Self-Help* – related to overview lifestyle considerations for healthy living.

BASIC EYE EXERCISES

Exercises to Help Keep the Eyes Healthy

RULES FOR SUCCESS

In order to achieve your goal of improved vision, it is important that you have a good space in which to work. That space should be quiet and private. It should have good lighting.

GETTING READY

The following are essential components to integrate into your vision improvement program.

1. **BREATHE**: as in yoga the importance of good breathing is essential to getting the most out of your exercises. As you look around your world become aware of when you are holding your breath. Breathing regularly will bring more oxygen to your eyes and reduce stress on your vision.
2. **BLINK**: remembering to blink will help you from staring and working too hard as you do your exercises. It will also soothe, and moisturize the eyes.
3. **SMILE**: adding a smile to your exercises will help reduce any tension you might be holding in your eyes. So smile as you go through life.
4. **HAVE FUN**: these exercises should be looked at as something you enjoy doing rather than a task you have to do. This is for you so enjoy your self.
5. **COMMIT**: as in anything you really want in life it is important to commit your self towards that goal. If you don't think that this is the proper time for you to make this promise of improved vision to yourself, then you might have to put this program off to another time.
6. **BELIEVE**: you must believe so you can conceive. So check in with your belief systems around improving your eyes. It is possible, so

make sure you believe it as you begin the program.

THE EXERCISES

In general, each of the exercises selected should be done for one to three minutes. For active computer users, try to take a 2-3 minute break every hour on the computer for eye exercises. Pick 2-3 exercises out (Palming is a good one to keep doing every hours).

Exercise # 1: BREATHING

How you breathe is an integral part of your health and your vision improvement. Smooth even breathing, deep and rhythmic helps us to center our attention on our inner self. We concentrate on the steady intake and exhalation of breath. Air is taken in all the way down to the bottom of the lungs. As it fills the lungs, they expand and our stomach pushes outward. As we exhale pushing air up slowly from the bottom of the lungs our stomach contracts. Most of us breathe very shallowly. We contract our lungs pull our stomach in and lift our shoulders when we inhale and push them out while we exhale. This is backwards!!! This exercise is very soothing. It can be done anytime, anywhere. It is difficult at first; so practice it patiently.

INSTRUCTIONS for Exercise # 1:

Do not wear any glasses or contact lenses if possible.

1. Sit on the floor or on a comfortable chair in a quiet room. Or stand in a balanced position with your knees slightly bent.
2. Close your eyes gently
3. Notice the rhythm of your breathing

4. Inhale deeply through the nose. Try to let your shoulders remain down and loose. Lungs are like
5. balloons so let them expand as they fill imagining that they go all the way down to your pelvic seat.
6. Exhale slowly and evenly through the mouth, pushing the air out from the bottom of your lungs. Feel your stomach and chest flatten but do not squeeze the air out. Let your lungs rest at the end of your exhale and simply allow your body to begin its next inhale. Try not to force the inhale, but wait for the natural impulse to breathe.
7. Repeat the inhale and the exhale letting a natural rhythm flow continuously. Do not over breathe.
8. Concentrate all your attention on the intake and exhalation of air. Let thoughts simply evaporate.
9. Let your eyelids hang heavy until they gently close. Your eyes should be unfocused and the eye muscles relaxed. Let your jaw go slack. Your mouth should be slightly opened. Say the word "Duuuuuh" in order to help your jaw drop.
10. Let your body move slightly to prevent muscles from becoming locked.
11. Continue breathing for three minutes.
12. When you open your eyes, don't look at anything in particular. Just let your eyes open without refocusing so that they can momentarily receive light in the most natural and relaxed way.

Practice this breathing technique as often as you wish with and without your glasses/contacts on.

Exercise # 2: VISION STATEMENTS

Your attitudes and belief systems are extremely important to improving your vision. Anatomy and physiology show that the eyes are tools for the mind, therefore focusing your mind in the correct way is essential for improving your vision. Therefore you should begin your program by declaring your intentions about your vision. The following are some possible statements you may use.

1. I can improve my vision.
2. My eye sight can get better.
3. I don't have to depend on my glasses to survive.
4. I am ready to see the world.
5. I can see without glasses.
6. I am now ready to see better.

These are just some examples of Vision Statements. You can create your own or adjust these to your particular vision condition.

Exercise # 3: PALMING

This exercise is done without any glasses or contact lenses. Palming is done to reduce stress around the eyes, by placing your palms around your eyes you are stimulating very powerful acupuncture points which help to calm the mind, relax the muscles around the eyes and bring healing energy to the eyes (through increased circulation).

INSTRUCTIONS for Exercise # 3:

1. Remember to breathe. Take two deep breaths.
2. Find a flat table to sit at, lean forward, place your elbows on the table, and close your eyes gently.

3. Now, place the palm of your left hand over your left eye, your fingers on your forehead, and the hollow of your palm directly over the eye, but not touching it. There is still room to blink. The heel of your hand rests on the cheekbones.
4. Then place the other hand over the other eye with the fingers crossing over the fingers from the other hand. The palm should be over the eye and the heel of the hand resting on the cheekbones.
5. Make sure your elbows are low enough so that your face and the weight of your head are resting in your palms so that there is no stress on the neck.

Palming gives you the opportunity not to try to see, but to just focus on relaxing your mind and eyes simultaneously. Even though we recommend that you do this for only three minutes, palming can be done for as little or as much as you like throughout the day as a way to relax your eyes and calm down from the tensions of daily life.

Exercise # 4: FIGURE EIGHTS

This exercise increases the flexibility of your eye muscles in a relaxed way.

INSTRUCTIONS for Exercise # 4:

1. Remember to breathe. Take two deep breaths.
2. Either stand or sit with your feet shoulder width apart with your hands at your sides. Do not cross your hands. Let your knees bend slightly.
3. Imagine a figure eight approximately ten feet from you lying horizontally (lying in the shape of an infinity sign)

4. Let your eyes trace along the figure eight without moving your head. First trace in one direction, then in the opposite direction. Always remember to continue to breathe and blink as your eyes move effortlessly along the figure eight. Check for tension in the jaw and let it release.

Exercise # 5: THE HOT DOG

This exercise is done to improve the flexibility of the inside muscles of your eyes (called the ciliary muscles). It is important to keep those muscles flexible.

INSTRUCTIONS for Exercise # 5:

1. Remember to breathe. Take two deep breaths.
2. Either stand or sit with your feet, shoulder width apart. If you are standing, make sure your knees are slightly bent.
3. Aim your eyes on any target in the distance.
4. While looking at your distant target, bring your index fingers, tips touching about eight inches in front of your eyes and into your line of sight.
5. Still aiming your eyes at the distant target calmly notice a mini hot dog has appeared between the tips of your fingers. Remember to continue to breathe easily and deeply. Do not let the awesome beauty of the mini hot dog to distract you and to cause you to aim your eyes directly at it. Continue to aim your eyes toward the distant target.
6. Pull the tips of your fingers apart slightly and observe the hot dog floating in the air.
7. Now keep the hot dog for two breaths, then look directly at your fingers and the hot dog will

disappear. Do not retrieve the hot dog for two breaths; then look again in the distance and find it once again. Switch back and forth for two minutes.

Exercise # 6: SCANNING

Staring is bad for your eyes because it freezes the energy and muscles, restricting the blood flow. Having your eyes scan is the opposite of staring. Scanning objects in your environment keeps your alive and energetic.

INSTRUCTIONS for Exercise # 6:

1. Remember to breathe. Take two deep breaths.
2. You can stand, sit or move around your environment.
3. As you look at objects, let your eyes glide over them as if you were painting them with your eyes. Continue to breathe deeply and easily.
4. As your eyes shift from object to object allow them to move easily without staring and continue to breathing and blinking. They should move in a relaxed manner without any tension. Make sure to release any release any tension in the moth or the jaw.

Exercise # 7: EFFORTLESS FOCUS

This exercise is done to increase your awareness of the object you are focusing on and what surrounds it.

INSTRUCTIONS for Exercise # 7:

1. Remember to breathe. Take two deep breaths.

2. Choose a point to focus your attention with great effort towards the point. Then relax your focus and look at it effortlessly. Be aware of the difference in how you look with effort and without effort. Notice how your peripheral vision expands when you look with ease.

This way of seeing should permeate your everyday seeing and allow your vision to expand rather than become more narrow.

Exercise # 8: NEAR AND FAR FOCUS

This exercise is done to improve the flexibility of the eyes as they change from distance viewing to near visual focus.

INSTRUCTIONS for Exercise # 8:

1. Remember to breathe. Take two deep breaths.
2. Either sit or stand with feet shoulder width apart. If you are standing bend your knees slightly.
3. Hold your thumb six inches away from your eyes directly in front of your nose.
4. Gaze easily at the thumb and take a deep breath. Then focus on a distant object at least ten feet away and take a deep breath. Change this focus every breath. Feel the muscles in your eyes change as you shift your focus.

Exercise # 9: EYE MASSAGE

Throughout China, eye exercises are done in schools, offices and factories. By taking regular breaks for eye exercises, many people are able to prevent the need for glasses. These massage exercises are primarily concerned with relaxing the eye muscles. You will be using finger massage to stimulate what are known as "acupressure points."

INSTRUCTIONS for Exercise # 9:

1. Remember to breathe. Take two deep breaths.
2. Sit quietly and relax, feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent.
3. Close the eyes gently.
4. When you press each point, be gentle. Don't use too much force and avoid putting pressure on the eyeballs.
5. Put your thumbs below your eyebrows and above the inside corners of your eyes and place the other four fingers of each hand on your forehead. Press your thumbs into the point for four breaths.
6. Use the thumb and index finger of either hand to massage the bridge of your nose. Press the point and then squeeze with an upward motion. Press and squeeze four times for four breaths.
7. Place your middle fingers on your cheek bones, directly below the center of each eye. Massage the center part of your cheek for four breaths.
8. Massage a point starting at your temples right below the eyebrows and level with the outside end of your eyes. Then place your thumbs on the inside end of the eyebrows and massage. Move to the middle of the eyebrow and massage. Then massage the end of the eyebrow. Lastly, massage right below the middle of your eye.

All these exercises can either be done at a separate time in the order given or incorporated into your daily life activities.

Exercise # 10: ZOOMING

This exercise is designed to improve the flexibility of your eye muscles.

INSTRUCTIONS for Exercise # 10:

1. Remember to breathe. Take two deep breaths.
2. Place your thumb out at arm's distance from you on your midline
3. As you breathe in move your thumb slowly towards you as you focus your eyes on it.
4. When you get three inches from your face move your arm away and begin again.

Exercise # 11: SUNNING

This exercise is done without any glasses or contact lenses. The eyes are light-sensing organs, they are designed to receive and interpret light energy. Eyes need good, natural light in order to stay healthy and vibrant. Even though we have heard that the reduction in the ozone layer, we need to protect ourselves from ultra-violet radiation, it is still important to allow the eyes to receive natural sunlight at least 20 minutes per day. (full-spectrum lights can be used if it is not possible to experience natural light.)

INSTRUCTIONS for Exercise # 11:

1. Remember to breathe. Take two deep breaths.
2. Sit or stand in a place where the sun is shining on you or under a full spectrum light source.
3. Close your eyes gently.
4. Move your head slowly from side to side so that you go from an area of shade into an area of light falling on your closed eyelids. Remember to continue to breathe easily and deeply. Feel the light on your eyelids; visualize accepting the light energy.
5. Alternate between five breaths of sunning and two breaths of palming.

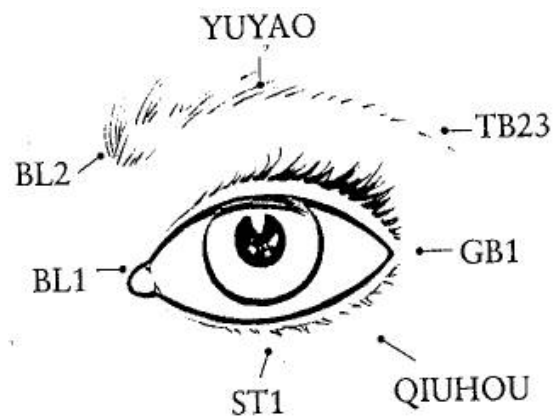
ACUPRESSURE MASSAGE FOR THE EYES

ACUPRESSURE EXERCISES FOR BETTER EYE HEALTH

Acupuncture/acupressure is an ancient system of healing developed over thousands of years as part of the traditional medicine of China, Japan and other Eastern countries.

The practice of acupuncture is thought to have begun with the discovery that the stimulation of specific areas on the skin affects the functioning of certain organs of the body, and that there exists currents of energy that flow in distinct patterns throughout the body called meridians. The belief and experience has been that when these currents of energy are flowing smoothly, there is health, when any of these currents are blocked there is pain and disease.

MAJOR ACUPRESSURE EYE POINTS



There are a number of acupuncture/acupressure points around the eyes (basically around the orbits of the eyes which are the bones that surround the eyeballs). The points shown above are some of the major local eye points.

1. *Jingming* (Bl-1) Urinary Bladder Channel, lies where the inner corner of the eye meets the nose. Bladder 1 and 2 are perhaps the best two points for eye problems of all kinds from early-stage cataracts or glaucoma to hysteria with vision loss. They are also used for problems with conjunctivitis due to Wind-Heat and Liver Heat, to blurred vision in the elderly due to Deficient Jing and Blood
2. *Zanzhu* (Bl-2) Urinary Bladder Channel, lies in the depressions at the inner ends of the eyebrows. See Bladder 1.
3. *Yuyao* Midpoint of the eyebrow in the hollow. Good for eye problems related to worry, excessive study and mental strain.
4. *Sizhukong* (T.B. 23) Sanjiao or Triple Burner Channel, in the depression at the outside end of the eyebrow. This is a local point good for eye and facial problems, whether due to Wind invasion or the Liver Yang and Fire.
5. *Tongziliao* (G.B. 1) Gall Bladder Channel, lies in the cavities on the outside corners of the eye sockets. Good for eye problems including conjunctivitis, red sore eyes, photophobia, dry, itchy eyes, early-stage cataracts and blurred vision, as well as lateral headaches.
6. *Qiuhou* Midway between St-1 and GB-1 along the orbit of the eyes.
7. *Chengqi* (St.1) directly below the pupil on the infraorbital ridge bone. This is a main point for all eye problems, including those due to Wind Cold, Wind Heat and Hyperactive Liver Yang.

Instructions for doing self-acupressure for eye health:

GENTLY massage each acupuncture point around the orbit of the eye, starting with B1-1 and massaging each point as you go up and outward. Each point should be massaged for approximately 5-10 seconds. You can massage both eyes at the same time. You can do this massage as often as you like over the course of the day. You may find that each point feels different in terms of sensitivity.

Keep BREATHING as you massage. Deep breathing helps the cells of your eyes receive the oxygen they need for healing. Practice long, slow abdominal breathing while massaging the acupressure points.

CAUTION: If you are pregnant, consult a trained acupuncturist before treating yourself. Do not massage on an area if it has a scar, burn or infection.

SELF-HELP

Since we consider most eye conditions to be a reflection of the health of the whole body, lifestyle choices and diet can play a major factor in getting and maintaining good vision. Below are some holistic recommendations by the author of this paper, Marc Grossman, OD, LAc. You can view his Vision Works web site at www.visionworksusa.com

- In general, a diet high in carotenoids, vitamins, minerals and sulfur-bearing amino acids is recommended.
- *Daily Juicing (organic if possible)* – 1 pint per day minimum. Up to 2-8 pints per day for healing. Vegetables used should be mostly greens.
- *Drink lots of water* - 8-10 glasses of purified water. Avoid carbonated, caffeinated and alcoholic beverages. They can actually dehydrate your eyes.
- *Manage your stress* - meditate; take a walk in nature, practice yoga, use visualization techniques or prayer on a daily basis.
- *Exercise daily* - do at least 20 minutes of aerobic exercise daily. Walking and swimming are two excellent forms of exercise.
- *Eye exercises* can help to bring energy and blood to the eyes, thereby helping to drain away toxins or congestion to the eyes.
- *Avoid foods to which you are allergic:* a study of 113 patients with chronic simple glaucoma showed immediate IOP increases of up to 20 millimeters when they were exposed to foods in to which they were allergic.

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