



## Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 5: January 29<sup>th</sup> – February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024

*Reducing the Effects of Eye Strain*

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### **Introduction**

As the trend for many workplaces move towards remote work, more and more time will be spent in front of the computer screen. We need to shift our thinking about safety to consider less than obvious safety risks like eye strain. The average person spends 6-9 hours of screen time a day, the tips we will discuss this week will help reduce the effects of eye strain despite the many hours of screen time often required for remote work.

### **Monday – Common Symptoms of Digital Eye Strain**

Most of us have experienced the symptoms we are going to cover today. The key to reducing the harmful effects start with recognizing the common symptoms of eye strain.

- Sore, tired, burning or itching eyes.
- Watery or dry eyes
- Blurred or double vision
- Headache
- Sore neck, shoulders or back
- Increased sensitivity to light
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling that you cannot keep your eyes open

### **Tuesday – Common Causes of Eye Strain**

Step 2 of reducing eye strain is identifying the correct cause. We often hear screen time is the main culprit of eye strain but there are other causes that can contribute as well. We will cover those today.

- Reading without pausing to rest your eyes
- Driving long distances and doing other activities involving extended focus
- Being exposed to bright light or glare
- Straining to see in very dim light
- Having an underlying eye problem, such as dry eye or uncorrected vision
- Being stressed or fatigued
- Being exposed to dry moving air from a fan, heating or air-conditioning system

### **Wednesday 10 Tips for Reducing Digital Eye Strain**

Now that we've covered to common symptoms and causes of eye strain, let's cover some tips for reducing the effects.

1. Getting a comprehensive eye exam annually will help determine any deterioration in eyesight and your doctor can work with you to determine next steps to prevent further degradation.
2. Use proper lighting. When you use a computer, your ambient lighting should be about half as bright as that typically found in most offices.
3. Minimize glare. Consider installing an anti-glare screen on your display to reduce eye strain.
4. Upgrade your display. If you have not already done so, replace your old tube-style monitor (called a cathode ray tube or CRT) with a flat-panel LED (light-emitting diode) screen with an anti-reflective surface.
5. Adjust your computer display settings. Adjusting the display settings of your computer can help reduce eye strain and fatigue. Generally, these adjustments are beneficial:



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- a. Brightness
- b. Text Size and Contrast
- c. Color Temperature

#### **Thursday – 10 Tips for Reducing Digital Eye Strain Cont.**

6. Blink more often. Blinking is very important when working at a computer; blinking moistens your eyes to prevent dryness and irritation.
7. Exercise your eyes. To reduce your risk of tiring your eyes by constantly focusing on your screen, look away from your computer at least every 20 minutes and gaze at a distant object (at least 20 feet away) for at least 20 seconds. Some eye doctors call this the "20-20-20 rule." Looking far away relaxes the focusing muscle inside the eye to reduce fatigue.
8. Take frequent breaks. To reduce your risk for computer vision syndrome and neck, back and shoulder pain, take frequent screen breaks during your workday (at least one 10-minute break every hour).
9. Modify your workstation. Position your computer screen so it's 20 to 24 inches from your eyes. The center of your screen should be about 10 to 15 degrees below your eyes for comfortable positioning of your head and neck.
10. Consider computer glasses. You may want to consider photochromic lenses or lightly tinted lenses for computer eyewear to reduce your exposure to potentially harmful blue light emitted by digital devices. Ask your eye doctor for details and advice.

#### **Friday – Open Discussion**

This week we've covered the common symptoms, causes and tips for reducing eye strain. Now let's open it up to the group and share your tips, tricks and experiences.

- Have you in the past or are you currently battling with eye strain?
- Have you tried any of the tips shared this week? Have you tried other tactics to reduce eye strain?
- If you have not, are you going to try out the tips we talked about this week?