

Exercises For Your Eyes



Eye Exercises

Many people experience tired, uncomfortable eyes after reading, using a computer, or looking at a mobile phone for long periods. You may notice blurred vision, headaches, double vision, or difficulty concentrating. In many cases, these symptoms can be improved with eye exercises.

Eye exercises are simple activities designed to help your eyes work together more comfortably. Like exercising your muscles, they can improve the way your eyes focus and move together. They are often recommended by your optometrist as part of a treatment plan for certain vision problems.



Why Do Some People Need Eye Exercises?

Reading and screen use require your eyes to turn inwards when focusing on close objects. For most people this happens naturally and comfortably; but some people's eyes struggle to work together for long periods, due to the balance of tension between the 6 muscles of each eye.

One common condition is called **convergence insufficiency**. This means the eyes find it difficult to turn inwards together when looking at something close. As a result, reading can become tiring, words may seem to move on the page, or you may occasionally see double.

Some people also have difficulty changing focus quickly between distant and near objects. This can happen after long periods of computer work and may cause eye strain, blurred vision, or slow focusing. Fortunately, simple exercises can often help improve the ability to maintain clear, comfortable vision.

Pencil Push-Ups

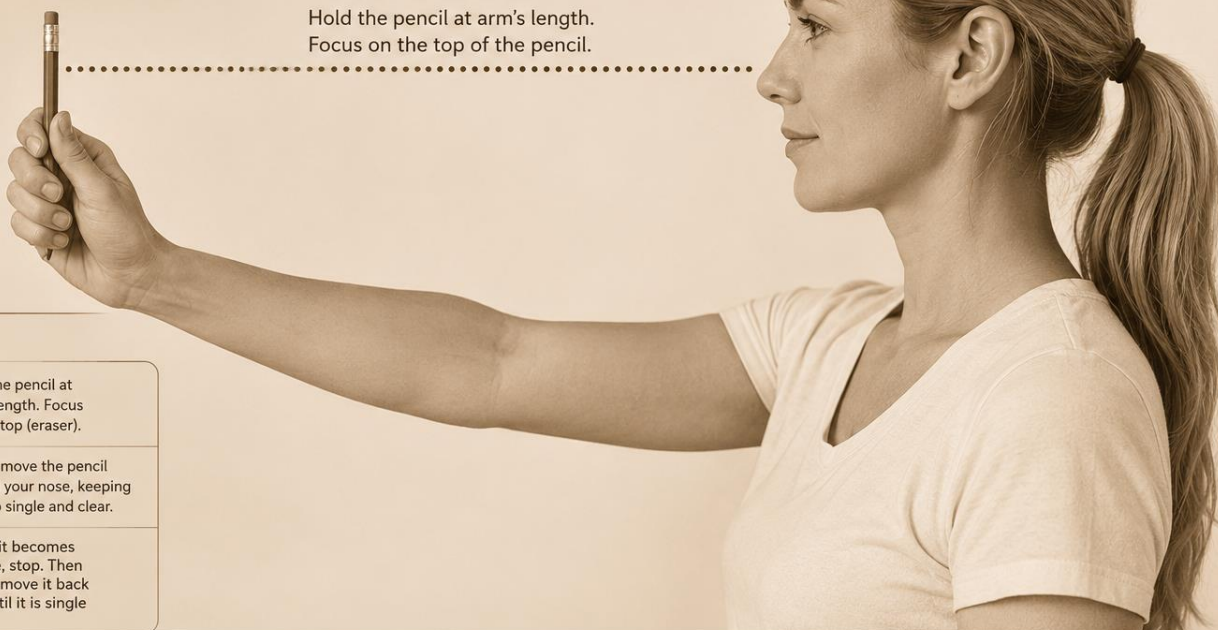
One of the best-known eye exercises is the Pencil Push-Up.

PENCIL PUSH-UPS

An eye exercise to improve focus and eye teaming.

START POSITION

Hold the pencil at arm's length.
Focus on the top of the pencil.



HOW TO DO IT



1 Hold the pencil at arm's length. Focus on the top (eraser).



2 Slowly move the pencil toward your nose, keeping the top single and clear.



3 When it becomes double, stop. Then slowly move it back out until it is single again.



DURATION
5–10 minutes
each day



CONSISTENCY
Practice daily for
best results.



BENEFITS

- Improves eye teaming
- Increases convergence (inward focusing)
- Reduces eye strain
- Improves reading comfort



TIPS

- Keep your head still.
- Move the pencil slowly.
- Stop if you feel strain or discomfort.

Hold a pencil at arm's length and focus on the letters near the tip. Slowly move the pencil towards your nose while keeping the letters single and clear. When it becomes double, stop moving, slightly remove until it becomes single and **HOLD** this position for the **COUNT OF FIVE**, then slowly move it back to arms' length and refocus again. Repeat this exercise 5 to 10 **TIMES**, or as recommended by your optometrist. You can practice this with a **colourful toothbrush**, or associate it with other routine daily activities. This exercise helps train your eyes to work together when looking at close objects.

Near-to-Far Focus Cycling (aka. 'Jump Accommodation')

Another useful exercise helps improve your ability to change focus.



Hold your finger or pen or pencil about 30 cm (12 inches) from your face. Focus closely for a few seconds, then look at a distant object, preferably outside the window, until it comes into clear focus. Then bring your focus back to the near object. This is one 'cycle'.

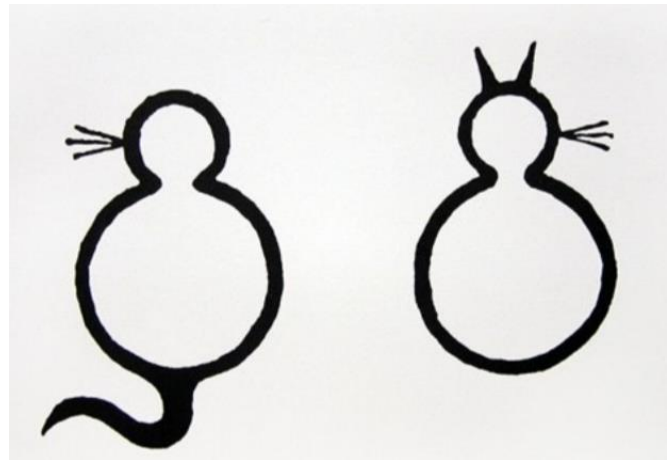
To avoid near focus fatigue, **set a timer** on your phone or computer for 30 seconds, then see **how many times you can cycle from near to far and back** in that time. Set the result as the target for next time!



Some optometrists recommend special picture exercises like the "Stereo Cats" exercise. These use pairs of pictures that encourage your eyes to work together to create a single three-dimensional image.

As you practise, your eyes gradually become better at working together when looking at close objects. Many people find these exercises enjoyable because they feel more like a puzzle than a medical treatment!

Your optometrist will explain how to perform these exercises correctly if they are suitable for you.



20/20/20

TO PREVENT DIGITAL EYE STRAIN



Visit www.aoa.org for more tips on how to protect your eye health and to find a doctor of optometry near you for your annual comprehensive eye exam.

AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION

Taking Regular Screen Breaks

Eye exercises work best when combined with healthy visual habits.

A simple way to reduce eye strain is to follow the **20-20-20 Rule**. Every 20 minutes, look at something at least 20 feet (6 metres) away for 20 seconds. This gives your focus a chance to relax.

Remember to blink regularly, especially when using digital devices, as people tend to blink less while concentrating on screens, and this can be a cause of uncomfortable *dry eye*.

Eye exercises are not a cure for short-sightedness, long-sightedness, astigmatism, or age-related focus problems (presbyopia). Glasses or contact lenses are still needed to correct these conditions. However, many people notice less eye strain, sharper vision, greater reading comfort, and fewer headaches after completing a recommended exercise programme.

The key is to practise routinely and follow the instructions given by your eye care professional.

In Summary

Eye exercises can help improve the way your eyes work together and focus during close work. They are simple, safe, and often effective for reducing eye strain caused by reading, computer use, and certain eye muscle problems.



If you experience tired eyes, headaches, blurred vision, or double vision while reading or using digital devices, speak to your optometrist. A comprehensive eye examination can determine whether eye exercises may help you enjoy clearer, more comfortable vision!