

EYE HEALTHCARE

EYE STRAIN ON THE COMPUTER?

With a rising number of people using computers at home and work, there has been an increase in the number of those reporting eye strain. Although, thankfully no direct link to permanent eye damage, extensive research by the **London Hazards Centre** say approximately 80% of 'Users' suffer some minor discomfort of one sort or another.

Most symptoms can be avoided by proper training and knowledge of the workstation layout (ergonomics), where the keyboard is directly in front of the user (at approximately 33cm) and the screen just beyond, at approximately 'arms length' (at approximately 66cm) The screen should definitely be below eye level, because the muscles around the eyes that are responsible for pulling them together, simultaneously pull them down, and hence result in achy strain around the eyes if positioned wrongly. The brightness, contrast and font size can be adjusted so as to enable comfortable screen work. Adjust the screen away from any office lamps or windows, preventing reflection from its surface, and use 'screen wipes' regularly.

Due to the high level of concentration with computer work, we tend to stare at the screen, not blinking enough. This tends to dry out the eyes (particularly with contact lenses),

causing them to be itchy, blurry and gritty. So remembering to blink properly, in conjunction with lubricating eye drops, should relieve this.

Ergonomically designed seating, providing good buttock, lower and upper back support, prevents general bodily and neck fatigue over the long term.

According to the EC Directive, employees are entitled to a free annual eye examination and to be provided with basic spectacles, provided they are specifically for DSE use (generally single vision or varifocal lenses with an anti-reflective coating). It also recommends a 10 minute break every hour and changes of activity to reduce general visual fatigue. If we take on board all these considerations, it will most definitely enable us to pass through our working day with much greater ease.

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