

Health for the Whole Family
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EYE STRAIN AT WORK: SEE THE SIGNS

If you are one of the 143 million Americans who frequently work in front of a computer, you may be experiencing symptoms of a common visual condition known as computer eye strain. Computer eye strain affects more than 70 percent of people who work in front of a computer on a daily basis. How can you tell if you are one of the many people suffering from computer eye strain?

Several symptoms may appear as a result of eye strain from computer use. They include headaches, blurred vision, frequent blinking and dry eyes, just to name a few.

For most people, eye strain is a problem due to focusing on the material they are viewing with such intensity that they end up not blinking as much. This causes the eyes to become dry. To combat this, it is recommended that computer users blink intentionally or use artificial tears to keep their eyes moist.

Other preventive measures that can be taken to ease computer eye strain include:

- Using proper lighting in your office. This means using fewer lightbulbs or fluorescent lights and closing the blinds.
- Replacing old computer monitors with digital, thin screen monitors.
- Minimizing glare on your computer and walls by using an anti-glare screen on your monitor and painting the walls a darker shade.
- Taking frequent breaks every two to three hours for five minutes. This allows your eyes to relax and become more lubricated as a result of increased blinking. Frequent breaks can also improve your ability to focus.
- Positioning the computer monitor between 20 to 26 inches away from your eyes with the top of the monitor just below horizontal eye level.
- Asking your eye care provider about anti-reflective lenses or special bifocal lenses.

In addition, the size of the text that appears on your monitor should be adjusted to a comfortable reading level. Typically, that means increasing the size to about three times larger than the size you normally read.

Although these preventive measures contribute to healthier eyes, people need to remember to have their eyes examined on a regular basis, especially if ongoing symptoms include eye discomfort, a noticeable change in vision, or double vision. It is advised that people under age 40 visit the eye doctor every other year while those over 40 should make annual visits.

Preventive medicine is just one aspect of care osteopathic physicians (D.O.s) provide. D.O.s are fully-licensed to prescribe medicine and practice in all specialty areas including surgery. D.O.s are trained to consider the health of the whole person and use their hands to help diagnose and treat their patients.

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