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Care and Contact Lens Center

VISUAL HYGIENE

Our visual system is affected by heredity and environmental factors. Since genetic factors are beyond our control, we need to work on decreasing environmental stress. We should also remember that everyone has individual limits to the amount of sustained near vision activities that can be done clearly and comfortably. Many computer related jobs, study demands, etc. may exceed even a normal healthy eye's capabilities. A person with a compromised focusing ability or eye posture defect will hit their limits much sooner.

Since we cannot eliminate near vision tasks, we should see that they be carried out with the least amount of stress or strain on the visual system.

- 1) Hold reading material at a reasonable distance. Never hold reading material closer than the distance between your knuckles and elbow. The further away you sit from the T.V., the better; you should be at least eight feet away with good illumination.
- 2) Provide adequate room illumination as well as good central illumination on all near tasks. The central illumination should be approximately three times brighter than that of the surroundings. Illumination should be positioned to avoid glare. For this reason, lighting coming from over one's shoulder is better.
- 3) When doing sustained near vision activities, look off into the distance every fifteen minutes or so. This will relax the focusing muscle. Also, learn to pace yourself; several short reading sessions are more efficient in terms of both comfort and comprehension than one long session. After 40 minutes or so, take a five minute break to relax your eyes.
- 4) Rather than placing your desk against the wall, have your desk facing into the room or out a window so that it's more convenient to look into the distance.
- 5) Avoid reading in the car or in bed, where material is generally held too close with poor illumination. Read in bed only in the upright position.
- 6) Wear your glasses as prescribed. If you notice a change in your vision, you should return to our office for an exam.