

VISUAL SENSE

Professional eye care news and advice for your whole family...



Latest updates

Grace and Vision Optometrist is always striving to provide premium eye care. We are specialised in children's vision (behavioural optometry), contact lenses fitting and OrthoK (corneal reshaping) and Ocular Therapeutics.

Due to computer usage, our eyes have to work harder than ever, at work and at home. Our staff at Grace & Vision regularly spend time explaining to our patients the different lens types available to reduce eye straining and fatigue. So in this newsletter we discuss the main options to improve comfort when using computer devices.

Our old phone number **3341 0897** from when we operated at Big Gun shopping centre will be disconnected. The old number will no longer divert to our current number **3345 3383** at 2 Nursery Ave, Runcorn. So please find enclosed the fridge magnet with our phone number. But if you already have one, please give it to someone who may find our services useful.

Do you experience Eye strain from computer use?

When you work at a computer for any length of time, it's common to experience eye strain/fatigue, blurred vision, dry eyes, headaches and other symptoms.

If you're under age 40, these problems may be due to an inability of your eyes to remain accurately focused on your screen or because your eyes have trouble changing focus from your keyboard to your screen and back again for prolonged periods.

If you're over age 40, the problem may be due to the onset of presbyopia: the normal age-related loss of accommodation (ability to focus on close objects).

What should I do?

1. Have a comprehensive eye exam to rule out vision problems and update your prescription, because even small inaccuracies in your prescription can contribute to computer vision symptoms.
2. If your glasses are up-to-date (or you don't need prescription glasses for most tasks) and you continue to experience eye discomfort during computer work, consider purchasing customized computer glasses. They are prescribed specifically to reduce eye strain and give you comfortable vision at your computer.

Prior to arriving for your eye exam, use a tape measure to measure the exact distance between your eyes and your computer screen from the normal seating position at your computer.

How are computer lenses different from other glasses?

Computer screens are usually positioned 50 to 70cm from the user's eyes. This is considered the intermediate zone of vision: closer than driving ("distance") vision, but farther away than reading ("near") vision.

Most young people wear eyeglasses to correct their distance vision. When used for computer work, your eyes need to accommodate (use the muscles that focus) the whole time. And reading glasses are prescribed to correct near vision only (they are too strong for computer use). Progressive lenses are prescribed for those over age 40 with presbyopia to correct near and far vision. The problem with these is that they don't have a large intermediate zone (in the lens area), which is required for comfortable computer work.

People often try to compensate for these vision problems by leaning forward or by looking down to see through the bottom portion of their glasses, often resulting in back, neck and shoulder pain.

Computer lens types:

1. For people under 40, Single vision lenses with a prescription to give the most comfortable vision at the user's computer screen. It provides the largest field of view.

This option is suitable for:

- people who don't have a 'eye-correction prescription'

or those already corrected during the day with contact lenses or through OrthoK.

- people who wear full prescription glasses for short-sightedness. A second pair of glasses with a slightly lower prescription can be used to provide greater comfort with computer work.

2. For people over the age of 40, Extended focus lenses: A lens that corrects near, intermediate, and, depending on your requirements, **distance vision up to a maximum of one to four metres**. These lenses will have a larger intermediate zone than regular progressive lenses. This allows more comfortable eye movement with less field restriction.

Advantages:

- Reduced back, neck and shoulder pain.
- Reduced headaches, sore eyes and eyestrain.
- Clear vision from near to intermediate distances.
- Fast and easy adaptation.
- Comfortable posture for near and intermediate vision.
- Increase computer/office work productivity.
- You won't feel as exhausted at the end of the days work.
- They are more comfortable glasses to use for most daily activities.

Disadvantages:

- Computer glasses are not suitable for driving
- You have an extra pair of glasses to look after. However, we have different types of shoes depending on the activity. Using a computer all day is the equivalent of having the right shoes for a day of mountain climbing.

What else can I do to reduce eye straining?

1. For maximum viewing comfort, the lenses should include an anti-reflective coating to eliminate reflections of light from the front and back surfaces of your lenses that can cause eye strain. Also a blue-light reduction coating to reduce glare caused by most modern LED backlit screens, 'blue-light' emitted from these screens scatters easily and contributes to eye fatigue.

2. Take regular breaks. Look up and into the distance (changing focus) regularly.
3. Appropriate distance to your computer and good lighting.

Your child's vision

Children assume their vision is the same as everyone else's, so it's common for visual problems to go undetected. One in six children in Australia have undetected vision problems. If left untreated, they can impact a child's educational, physical and social development.

Symptoms that may indicate your child has a vision problem:

- When reading:
 - Losing their place or making reversals (re-reading or re-writing text)
 - Leaving out or confusing small words
 - Holding the reading material very close to their face
 - Slow in learning to read.

- Avoiding other close up work
- Red, watery eyes
- Blinking frequently
- Rubbing eyes
- Sensitivity to light
- One eye turns in or out while the other points straight ahead
- Complaining of headaches, blurry or double vision
- Turning or tilting the head to see with one eye only
- Covering or closing one eye
- Squinting or sitting very close when watching television
- Poor hand-eye coordination
- Difficulty identifying objects and/or people at a distance
- Struggling in any way in the classroom and with their learning.

If you observe one or any combination of these symptoms then a comprehensive **eye examination** is one of the first investigations that should be performed. Such an examination could detect any number of vision problems including:

- Short-sightedness (myopia: difficulty seeing objects in the distance)
- Long-sightedness (hyperopia: difficulty seeing objects up close)
- Astigmatism (distortion of vision at any distance)
- Lazy eye (amblyopia)
- Turned eye (strabismus)
- Eye focusing problems (accommodative dysfunction)
- Eye coordination problems (convergence excess or insufficiency)

Most visual problems can be more easily treated if detected early. Any of them will hinder the ability to learn if neglected. The Optometrists Association of Australia recommends that children have a comprehensive eye test with an optometrist before starting school and regularly as they progress through primary and secondary school.

Treatments:

Vision treatment strategies may include:

- Prescription of glasses for part time or full time wear
- Vision therapy: Vision therapy aims to improve binocular vision, visual perceptual skills and other abilities through one or a combination of eye exercises, lenses, prisms or eye patching.
- Referral to a another health care practitioner.

Health Fund Benefit: Use it before you lose it!

Most extras covers permit one complete spectacle claim every calendar year. In most cases unused benefits are not carried over to the next year, so you will lose this year's benefit# if you don't use your entitlement before 31st December.

Different health funds entitle you to different benefits Please check with your health fund for your exact benefits.