

Computer Vision Syndrome

An increasing number of individuals use computers in their daily lives with many experiencing visual difficulties related to this use.



The American Optometric Association's recommended proper computer workstation positioning.

What is Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS)?

According to the American Optometric Association, Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) is the “complex of eye and vision problems related to near work experienced during or connected with computer work.” Studies indicate 90% of people who work on a computer for three hours or more report symptoms of CVS.

What are common symptoms of CVS?

Common symptoms of CVS are:

- Eyestrain
- Light sensitivity (photophobia)
- Blurred or double vision
- Head, neck or backaches
- Dry or irritated eyes

When did CVS first begin?

In the 1990's, the use of computers expanded rapidly across the country. Today, with over 200 million computers in the United States, they have become part of our daily lives. In the workplace, the computer's versatility started to replace portions of our jobs. Many workers resented switching to computers and complained about symptoms they felt using a computer induced.

Why do people develop CVS?

Computer users might develop CVS for a number of reasons, including:

- Computer users are using a computer often, and therefore viewing a computer screen for hours at a time. Extended near tasks of this nature can be very visually stressful.
- Computer screens are typically not as “clear” as printed material, thereby making it more challenging to comfortably view the screen for hours at a time.
- The brightness of a computer screen may be uncomfortable for the eyes.

- Computer screens may have glare problems depending upon where they are positioned with respect to room lighting and external light through windows.
- The position of the screen may be too high or too low to comfortably view for long periods of time.

What are some tips for minimizing the problems associated with CVS?

- Take alternative task breaks throughout the day to relieve stress associated with extended computer work. Tasks that do not require looking at a computer screen or other near work will reduce computer related eyestrain and provide your eyes with needed breaks.
- Adjust the monitor's brightness and contrast to more comfortable levels.
- To reduce glare on the computer screen; use shades or blinds for windows and bright sun light.
- Use an adjustable chair allowing you to sit at a comfortable height. The screen should be positioned at a 10-20 degree angle and located at an approximate 24 inch viewing distance.
- Use artificial tear drops if

you are experiencing dry or irritated eyes. Blinking more frequently may also help dry eye symptoms.

Special computer eye wear may be the answer:

In addition to adjusting your workspace, it is essential that the most appropriate eye glass prescription is in place for computer use. Because a person's computer screen is often located at a different distance than one's typical reading distance, there may be a benefit from a separate prescription for use at the computer. For some bifocal wearers, the smaller viewing area through the reading area of the bifocal or progressive lens (“invisible bifocal”) can create additional visual challenges for a computer user. In this case, a pair of glasses (without the bifocal) with the lens prescription ideal for computer use has been a great option for many.