



# Computer Vision Syndrome

According to the American Optometric Association (AOA), surveys show that the most frequent health complaints among computer workers are vision-related. Studies indicate that 50 percent to 90 percent of computer users suffer from symptoms of Computer Vision Syndrome.<sup>1</sup>

Although many of the symptoms of Computer Vision Syndrome are related to uncorrected vision problems that can only be diagnosed through a comprehensive eye exam, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has suggested a number of ergonomic solutions that may help prevent the onset or severity of Computer Vision Syndrome.<sup>2</sup>

**Monitor distance** – The computer screen should be 20 to 28 inches from the eyes, allowing you to read the screen without leaning your head, neck or trunk forward or backward.

**Monitor position** – The computer screen should be directly in front of you and 15 to 20 degrees below eye level (about 4 or 5 inches) as measured from the center of the screen so you don't have to twist your head or neck.

**For multifocal lenses wearers** – You should be able to view the screen without bending the head or neck backward. Lenses made especially for computer work may be prescribed by your Eye Doctor.

**Glare** – (for example, from windows, lights): If there is no way to minimize glare from light sources, consider using a screen glare filter, or discuss with your Eye Doctor the addition of anti-glare lenses if you wear glasses. The goal is to reduce the glare so that you do not need to assume an awkward posture in order to clearly see the information on your screen.

**Document holder** – Position at about the same height and distance as the monitor screen so there is little head movement and need to re-focus, when you look from the document to the screen.

**Lighting** – Use bright lights with a large lighted area when working with printed materials. Limit and focus light for computer tasks.

**Let your eyes take a break** – Try the 20/20/20 rule to avoid eyestrain during long periods of computer use. Every 20 minutes while using the computer, look 20 feet away for 20 seconds to give your focusing muscles time to rest.

**Blink** – To minimize dry, itchy, burning eyes during computer use, blinking often keeps the front surface of your eyes from drying out. You can also have your Eye Doctor recommend artificial tear supplements.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.aoa.org/x5253.xml>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/checklist.html>

## SYMPTOMS OF CVS:

- Dry, itchy, or burning eyes
- Blurred vision at near (or in the distance after long periods of near work)
- Eyestrain
- Headaches
- Aching of the neck and shoulders

## CAUSES OF CVS:

- Uncorrected vision problems
- Improper lighting
- Glare on the computer screen
- Incorrect working distance from or position of screen
- Poor seating posture

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