The Learning Hubs

Health & safety

Tips for Reducing Eye Strain on Small Screen Displays

Eyestrain on Computer Screens

Although not associated with long-term consequences, eyestrain resulting from computer use can be bothersome and uncomfortable**.** Making a few simple adjustments can help keep your eyes rested and ready.

Fortunately, the school environment and structure does not tend to present opportunities for pupils to focus constantly at screens for prolonged periods of time. For example, short periods with breaks in between and interaction with teachers and peers during the class enforces regular eye breaks and lessens the likelihood of staring continually at the screen. Device usage at home may of course be different and it is important for pupils to understand the symptoms of eye strain and how best to prevent it.

Signs and symptoms of Eyestrain

Eyestrain associated with computer use isn't thought to have serious or long-term consequences, but it can cause some discomfort. If you begin to feel any of the below symptoms please adopt the appropriate measures to prevent the reoccurrence of this.

Please also bear in mind, that many of the symptoms are common-place and are not necessarily attributed to eyestrain. If you wear glasses or contacts, make sure you have the right prescription.

- Sore, tired, burning or itching eyes
- Blurred or double vision
- Watery eyes
- Dry eyes
- Headache
- Difficulty shifting focus between screen and paper documents
- Coloured fringes when you look away from the screen
- Increased sensitivity to light

We suggest taking the below steps to reduce the strain.

How to Minimize Eyestrain

Looking after you eyes
Throughout the day, give your eyes a break by forcing them to focus on something different oobjects on a different focal length such as a distant object.
- Hold a finger a few inches in front of your face; focus on the finger as you slowly move it away; focus on something far in the distance and then back to the finger; slowly bring the finger back toward your face. Next, shift your focus to something farther than eight feet away and hold your eyes there for a few seconds. Repeat this exercise three times, several times a day.

- If possible, lean back and close your eyes for a few moments. At the very least, try to give yourself a five-minute rest every hour.
- We often blink less when looking at computer screens which can cause our eyes to dry out slightly. Make a conscious effort to blink more often as it refreshes your eyes by producing tears that will help moisten and lubricate them.

Be aware of display settings and the surrounding light

- Take some of the strain off your eyes by making sure your screen brightness/contrast is comfortable, e.g. not too bright or not too dark. Adjust contract or brightness settings regularly when moving from one environment to another.
- Beware of glare coming from reflected light or surrounding light. To check glare, turn you display off which will allows you to see the reflected light. The worst problems are generally from sources above or behind you, including fluorescent lighting and sunlight. Move your seat position or adjust the angle of your device accordingly.
- Consider turning off some or all of the overhead lights. If you need light for writing or reading, use an adjustable desk lamp.
- Move so that you are not constantly in one place or in a position where there is a strong degree of reflected light coming from one angle, E.g. with a window behind you. Close blinds and shades where appropriate but consider others in close proximity.
- Wipe the dust from your screen regularly. Dust on the screen cuts down on contrast and may contribute to glare and reflection problems.