

# COMPUTER VISION SYNDROME



Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS), also referred to as Digital Eye Strain, describes a group of eye and vision-related problems that result from prolonged computer, tablet, e-reader and cell phone use. Many individuals experience eye discomfort and vision problems when viewing digital screens for extended periods. The level of discomfort appears to increase with the amount of digital screen use.

*To help alleviate digital eye strain, follow the 20-20-20 rule; take a 20-second break to view something 20 feet away every 20 minutes.*

## **Most common symptoms**

Eyestrain  
Headaches  
Blurred vision intermittently  
Dry eyes, burning eyes  
Neck and shoulder pain

## **These symptoms may be caused by:**

Poor lighting  
Glare on a digital screen  
Improper viewing distances  
Poor seating posture  
Uncorrected vision problems  
Combination of these factors

## **8 steps to avoid CVS**

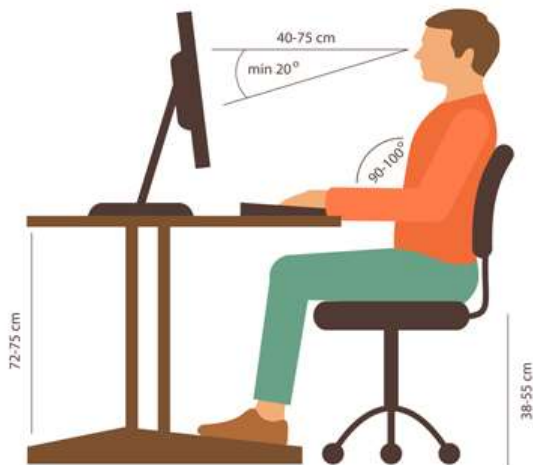
- Regular eye exam
- Use proper lighting
- Minimize glare
- Adjust brightness and contrast of computer screen
- Blink more often
- Take frequent breaks
- Modify your work station
- Customise your eye wear

Viewing a computer or digital screen often makes the eyes work harder. Viewing a computer or digital screen is different than reading a printed page. Often the letters on the computer or handheld device are not as precise or sharply defined, the level of contrast of the letters to the background is reduced, and the presence of glare and reflections on the screen may make viewing difficult. The unique characteristics and high visual demands of computer and digital screen device viewing make many individuals susceptible to the development of vision-related symptoms.

The presence of even minor vision problems can often significantly affect comfort and performance while using computer or other digital screen devices. Uncorrected or under corrected vision problems can be major contributing factors to computer-related eyestrain.

## TREATMENT OF COMPUTER VISION SYNDROME

Solutions to digital screen-related vision problems are varied. However, they can usually be alleviated by obtaining regular eye care and making changes in how you view the screen.



**Eye Care-** Correct prescription of glass number for specific distance of computer use is recommended for optimal comfort in vision.

**Viewing the Computer-** Some important factors in preventing or reducing the symptoms of CVS have to do with the computer and how it is used. This includes lighting conditions, chair comfort, location of reference materials, position of the monitor, and the use of rest breaks.

**Location of computer screen -** Most people find it more comfortable to view a computer when the eyes are looking downward. Optimally, the computer screen should be 15 to 20 degrees below eye level (about 4 or 5 inches) as measured from the center of the screen and 20 to 28 inches from the eyes.

**Reference materials -** These materials should be located above the keyboard and below the monitor. If this is not possible, a document holder can be used beside the monitor. The goal is to position the documents so you do not need to move your head to look from the document to the screen.

**Lighting -** Position the computer screen to avoid glare, particularly from overhead lighting or windows. Use blinds or drapes on windows and replace the light bulbs in desk lamps with bulbs of lower wattage.

**Seating position -** Chairs should be comfortably padded and conform to the body. Chair height should be adjusted so your feet rest flat on the floor. If your chair has arms, they should be adjusted to provide arm support while you are typing. Your wrists shouldn't rest on the keyboard when typing.

**Rest breaks -** To prevent eyestrain, try to rest your eyes when using the computer for long periods. Rest your eyes for 15 minutes after two hours of continuous computer use. Also, for every 20 minutes of computer viewing, look into the distance for 20 seconds to allow your eyes a chance to refocus.

**Blinking -** To minimize your chances of developing dry eye when using a computer, make an effort to blink frequently. Blinking keeps the front surface of your eye moist.

**Regular eye examinations and proper viewing habits can help to prevent or reduce the development of the symptoms associated with Computer Vision Syndrome.**