

## Eye exercises for improved vision? <sup>[1]</sup>

Dear Alice,

My question is regarding eye exercises. I am short sighted and wear my glasses constantly. Recently I came across some eye exercises which claim that they can help you restore your vision. Their reasons seem convincing. But if this were true, why do the majority of people with poor vision still wear glasses. I just want to know if it's possible to restore your vision by doing these exercises? If not, is there any other way to restore vision without undergoing surgery? Finally, is there any way to ensure that my eye sight does not get any worse?

Thank you,  
Worried about Vision

### Answer

Dear Worried about Vision,

It's great that you're keeping an eye on your health and not diving head first into the latest health trends. To answer your question, there's some evidence to show that eye exercises may be helpful in delaying the need for contacts and glasses but little reliable evidence that proves that these exercises can actually improve nearsightedness (also known as myopia). That being said, most of the eye exercise programs that are advertised haven't been tested through randomized control trials to determine their effectiveness. If you're hoping to minimize the strain on your eyes and keep up your eye health, there are some steps you can take to do so. However, the only way to correct myopia is by wearing corrective lenses (i.e., glasses and contact lenses) or undergoing surgery.

While correcting nearsightedness or farsightedness requires some outside help, there are steps you can take to minimize strain and damage to your eyes and keep up your eye health. These include:

- **Getting regular eye check-ups.** Regular visits to your eye care professional can enable them to determine how your eyes are doing, as well as detect any signs of eye disease. It's advised that adults between the ages of 20 and 49 visit an eye care specialist every three to five years.

- **Taking care of your physical health.** Blindness is most often caused by diseases of the eye, such as glaucoma and macular degeneration, or linked to conditions that can damage nerve tissue, such as diabetes or high blood pressure. Addressing these conditions through nutrition, physical activity, or medical treatment can help keep your eyes, and the rest of your body, healthy.
- **Nipping cigarette use in the butt.** Chemicals in cigarette smoke can damage the macula, the part of the eye that's responsible for seeing fine details in vision tasks, such as reading. If the cells of the macula die, or if tiny blood vessels burst in this area, a person's eyesight can become irreversibly damaged.
- **Protecting against ultraviolet (UV) rays.** UV rays from the sun and other sources can damage both the inner and outer parts of the eye, thereby increasing the risk of cataracts and other eye disorders that may lead to blindness. Simple yet effective ways of protecting your eyes include wearing sunglasses (preferably those with lenses that have built-in UV protection) or a hat with a large brim.
- **Adding in some vitamin A to your meals.** Vitamin A helps to keep the outer membrane of the eye (the cornea) clear and plays a major role in night vision. The eyes also use it to turn light into nerve signals. Some good sources of this vitamin include: carrots, broccoli, sweet potatoes, mangos, and liver.
- **Being mindful of the amount of light.** Reading with adequate amounts of light in the room means less strain on your eyes. Just don't overdo it — too much light can be harmful to the very sensitive light receptor cells in your eyes.
- **Wearing proper protection.** Goggles or protective glasses can help protect against foreign objects in the eye, whether it's dust or an opponent's elbow, which can scratch or injure the eye and may cause severe damage.
- **Giving your eyes a break.** If you have to look at a computer or screen for long periods of time, the eyes can become tired. You can give them a quick break by looking at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds every 20 minutes.

For more tips on healthy vision, visit the [American Optometric Association](#) [2], [American Academy of Ophthalmology](#) [3] or the [National Eye Institute](#) [4] websites.

Here's looking at you,

Alice!

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