

A close-up photograph of a woman's face, partially obscured by her hand as she covers her eyes. The image is bathed in a warm, orange-toned light, creating a soft, ethereal atmosphere. The woman's eyes are visible through the opening of her hand, looking directly at the viewer.

THE ULTIMATE EYE EXERCISE GUIDE

Julian Whitaker, MD

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Note: Julian Whitaker, MD, has extensive experience in the areas of preventive medicine and natural healing. All recommendations in this report have met stringent criteria for safety and effectiveness; however, they have not been reviewed by the Food and Drug Administration. The recommendations in this report are not intended to replace the advice of your physician, and you are encouraged to seek advice from competent medical professionals for your personal health needs.

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EASY EYE EXERCISES

Exercise is essential for health. Regular physical activity makes your muscles strong and flexible and your bones dense. It gives your cardiovascular system the workout it needs to keep your heart muscle and lungs in tiptop shape. Even your brain needs “mental exercise” to stay sharp and focused. But your eyes?

Believe it or not, exercise is highly beneficial for your eyes. Each eye is controlled by six extraocular (outside the eye) muscles that not only move it up and down and from side to side, but also orchestrate subtle movements that enhance focus as you change your gaze from one object to another. In addition to the extraocular muscles, tiny muscles—collectively called the ciliary body—control the lenses of the eyes, which are constantly changing and adjusting to bring things into focus.

Because we are so dependent on our sense of vision, the muscles of our eyes are constantly at work. And because we often use them in stressful repetitive patterns—working at a computer screen, reading, watching TV, or driving for prolonged periods, for example—they are subjected to additional strain and fatigue.

One of the best ways I know to reduce stress and strain on the eyes, improve the flexibility and strength of the eye muscles, and, in some cases, actually improve visual acuity, is to practice eye exercises. The 10 quick and easy exercises provided in this special report have a long history of use, some of them dating back thousands of years. They have been used by ophthalmologists, recommended by ergonomics experts, and incorporated into many vision-enhancing programs.

10 Exercises for Better Vision

Each of these 10 quick and easy exercises take only minutes a day and can be done at home or in your office. Some can even be done when you're out and about. Just remove your glasses (it's okay to keep your contacts in, but preferable to remove them) and follow these simple instructions.

Exercise #1: A Palming Experience

When you've been at the computer, poring over a book, or doing close work such as embroidery for extended periods, take a break and reenergize your eyes with this tried-and-true yoga technique.



- Get in a comfortable position, sitting or lying down. Rub your hands together briskly for a few seconds, close your eyes, and place your hands over your eyes.
- Rest your fingers on your forehead (fingers crossing or not—your preference) and the heels of your hands on your cheekbones. Your palms should cover your eyes but not touch them, to avoid placing pressure on your eyeballs.
- Take a deep breath and relax, keeping your eyes closed and breathing normally, for one to three minutes, or longer. The warmth of your hands and the blocking out of light completely relaxes the eyes—and gives your brain a break as well.

You may repeat this exercise as often as desired.

Exercise #2: Roll, Roll, Roll Your Eyes

Here's another exercise borrowed from yoga. This increases the flexibility and elasticity of the extraocular muscles.

- Close your eyes for a few seconds, relax, then open your eyes and begin this series of movements with your head erect and stationary.
- First, look down at the floor. Slowly roll your eyes to the left, then up towards the ceiling. Continue this slow circular movement until you're looking up at the ceiling, then roll your eyes towards the right, and finally down towards the floor again.
- Blink a few times, relax your eyes, then repeat, moving your eyes in the opposite direction this time. Focus on making the circles with your eyes as large as possible and keeping your head still. Repeat this sequence a total of five times in each direction, blinking and resting for several seconds between repetitions.

Exercise #3: Eye and Facial Stretches

Another way to relax the extraocular muscles is by gently stretching the skin and connective tissues surrounding the eye sockets. Drs. Marc Grossman and Glen Swartwout recommend the following series of stretches in their book *Natural Eye Care, An Encyclopedia*.

- With eyes open, place your index fingers on the skin just to the right of each eye (the outer edge of the right eye and the inner edge of the upper left side of the nose). Looking to the left, gently pull the skin to the right.



- Move your fingers to the left sides of the eyes and stretch the skin towards the left while looking right. Move your fingers just below your eyes and, looking upward, gently pull your fingers down.
- Finally, place your fingers just below your eyebrows and, looking down, stretch the skin upward.

Time each stretch with your breath, inhaling as you pull the skin and exhaling as you release it. Repeat the entire sequence six times. Drs. Grossman and Swartwout also suggest practicing deep breathing during these stretches to further relieve stress and tension.

Exercise #4: “The Squincher”

I’m not sure that “squinch” is a real word, but if it isn’t, it should be. According to my kids, it’s the face you make when you wrinkle your nose and close your eyes tightly, as if you’re supremely disgusted. It is also a great exercise for relaxing your face and eyes, especially if you’re prone to squinting.

- To properly squinch, take a deep breath, squeeze your eyes tightly together, exaggerate the wrinkling of your nose and upper lip, and tighten the muscles in your jaw and neck. Hold your breath for two or three seconds, then exhale, opening your eyes and mouth wide to release your muscles.
- Wrap it up by closing your mouth and relaxing all the muscles in your face.

This exercise only takes a few seconds and may be repeated two or three times. It is probably best done in private, because squinching can make you look pretty darn silly.

Exercise #5: Twist & Shout

The Cambridge Institute for Better Vision has been around for more than 30 years and has hundreds and hundreds of satisfied clients. It uses a mind-body approach that incorporates the physical and emotional aspects of vision and works with the entire body, not just the eyes. I want to share with you a Cambridge Institute exercise that is designed to relax the eyes and upper body as well as facilitate the movement of the eyes.

- Stand with your legs about shoulder-width apart, knees relaxed, and arms at your sides.
- Twist your upper body left to right, rotating from the hips and pelvis and allowing your arms to move naturally. This should be a nice,

(continued on page 6)

Dr. Hart's Vision Chart (large)
For use with Eye Exercise #10 on pages 7–9.

20/20

2 4 6 8 10



1 O F N P V D T C H E
Y B A K O E Z L R X
3 E T H W F M B K A F
B X F R T O S M V C

5 R A D V S X P E T O

M P O E A N C B K F

7 C R G D B K E P M A

F X P S M A R D L G

9 T M U A X S O G P B

H O S N C T K U Z L





(continued from page 3)

relaxed movement, so make sure you don't tense up the muscles in your shoulders, neck, and back, and breathe normally. Allow your eyes to move with your body, rather than jumping from one thing to another.

Do this exercise for one or two minutes. Don't swing too fast, and if you get dizzy, stop immediately. And, by the way, shouting is actually not required.

Exercise #6: Tap, Tap, Tap

Here is another Cambridge Institute exercise, this one designed to "stimulate the visual centers of your brain and develop the ability to focus clearly."

- Place your palms together at the upper chest level. Keeping the base of the palms together, relax your wrists, bend your fingers slightly so your fingertips touch, and rapidly tap your fingertips together. Continue tapping for one or two minutes.

This exercise may seem a little "out there" to some of you, but the concept of specific points on the skin correlating with other areas and energy patterns in the body is the basis of one of mankind's oldest medical disciplines: acupuncture. Tapping is considered to be an integral part of the Cambridge Institute's program, and it is certainly worth a try.

Exercise #7: Hither & Yon

This is a popular exercise for improving accommodation, the automatic adjustment of the lenses to focus from one thing to another. All you need is your thumb and an object of your choice some 10 to 15 feet away.

- Hold your thumb about six inches in front of your face. Look at it for the duration of one complete inhalation and exhalation, then turn your focus to your object in the distance for one full breath. Repeat two more times, then relax.

Sneak this quick exercise in several times a day. You can do it while you're sitting at your desk, when you're watching TV, or any time.

Exercise #8: Let the Sun Shine In

In the late 1800s, New York physician William Bates developed a series of exercises for improving vision that have endured to this day. One of the best known of Dr. Bates' exercises is sunning.



- Go outside on a sunny day, close your eyes, and face the sun directly. With your eyes closed, slowly rotate your head as far as possible to the left. Return to the center, then slowly rotate your head as far as possible to the right. Repeat this exercise for three to five minutes.

Sunning eye exercises aside, I encourage you to spend at least 10 to 15 minutes outdoors every day—without sunglasses, contacts, or corrective lenses—and allow natural sunlight to enter your eyes. Sunlight contains a broad spectrum of visible and invisible wavelengths of light that have profound effects on our health.

No, I'm not suggesting that you stare at the sun or that you forgo sunglasses altogether. When you're outside for prolonged periods, sunglasses are recommended. But it is important that your eyes, the most sun-sensitive organs in your body, get a good dose of this essential "nutrient" every day.

Exercise #9: Reset Your Brain

One of the best antidotes to stress, according to L. Ron Hubbard in his book *The Problems of Work*, is to stop what you're doing, go outside, and "reset" your brain.

- Look at the things around you. Actively notice the details of the buildings, trees, cars, and other things in your environment. This exercise "extroverts" your sense of awareness, giving you a much lighter perspective and more energy.
- This same principle can be used to help reduce stress and strain on the eyes, and it is especially useful for those of you who do a lot of up-close activities such as reading, writing, or working at a computer. When your eyes are feeling tired and strained, shift your focus to things outside your immediate work area. If you can go outside, practice the exercise as described above. If not, then shift your attention to distant objects outside the window or across the room. Look at them carefully, tracing their outlines with your eyes.

You don't have to spend a lot of time on this—even five minutes of focusing your attention on outward objects will do you and your eyes a world of good. Repeat this at least once an hour when you are engaged in intense, concentrated, close work.

Exercise #10: The Hart Charts

This final exercise involves eye charts developed in 1961 by Dr. Walter Hart of Tacoma, Washington. (Small chart below, large chart provided on



pages 4–5.) This exercise will help strengthen your eyes' ability to shift focus from near objects to far and back again.

- Place the large chart at least eight feet away from you, tacked or taped on a wall or propped up on a shelf or piece of furniture. (You should be able to see all the letters on the chart clearly.) Hold the small chart in your hand a foot or two away from your eyes. (Again, you should be able to read all the letters; if it is fuzzy, adjust the distance.) The small chart should be just below the line of vision of the large chart.
- Sitting or standing comfortably, read aloud the first three letters from the top line of the small chart. Shift your focus to the large chart and read the next three letters. Go back to the small chart and read the next three. Continue until you've read all the letters, alternating between the small and large charts.
- Each time you do this exercise, change directions. For example, start at the bottom right corner and read right to left, or read down the columns rather than across. It is also helpful to do this exercise with one eye at a time, covering the other eye with your hand, a spoon, or another object.

Dr. Hart's Vision Chart (Small)										
20/20										
	2	4	6	8	10					
1	O	F	N	P	V	D	T	C	H	E
	Y	B	A	K	O	E	Z	L	R	X
3	E	T	H	W	F	M	B	K	A	F
	B	X	F	R	T	O	S	M	V	C
5	R	A	D	V	S	X	P	E	T	O
	M	P	O	E	A	N	C	B	K	F
7	C	R	G	D	B	K	E	P	M	A
	F	X	P	S	M	A	R	D	L	G
9	T	M	U	A	X	S	O	G	P	B
	H	O	S	N	C	T	K	U	Z	L



This whole exercise only takes a couple of minutes to complete and should be repeated every day.

Keep Your Eye on the Ball

Vision is perhaps our most precious sense, and it's one that we take for granted—until we start to lose it. Many people assume that vision loss is caused by bad genes or just plain bad luck. Others think it is an inevitable part of aging. Not true. Scientific research makes it very clear that, in most cases, there is much you can do to preserve your vision throughout life. Eating a good diet, maintaining your ideal weight, avoiding smoking, getting enough physical exercise, and taking nutritional supplements that target eye health all protect against degenerative diseases of the eyes.

The eye exercises in this special report will not, on their own, allow you to throw away your glasses or make the blind see. However, when used as part of a comprehensive, nutrition-based approach to vision support, they will relieve eye strain and tension, and perhaps even improve visual acuity.

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