



## MANAGING EYE & VISION SYMPTOMS CAUSED BY **Virtual Learning & Working**

Many children are learning virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual learning may lead to increased screen time on the computer, tablet, and/or phone. Due to prolonged near work or computer vision syndrome, the increased screen time may lead to visual symptoms not previously experienced. Uncorrected refractive errors (the need for eyeglasses), eye teaming, focusing problems or dry eyes may be responsible for the symptoms. Many adults are also working from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, possibly in very different environments from their typical work conditions. This may lead to eye and vision symptoms due to the same causes as with children.

**Here are a few things which you should be aware of and some possible solutions, including tips to help make working from home more comfortable:**

- Symptoms may include headaches, tired eyes, loss of place when reading, blurry vision, eye strain, double vision, and dry eye
- Consider the 20-20-20 rule: look 20 feet away for 20 seconds every 20 minutes
- Intentionally blink on a routine basis to provide a smooth tear film surface and alleviate dry eye
- Instill preservative-free artificial tear drops prior on a routine basis to ward off dry eye symptoms
- Move the screen farther from your eyes (at least the distance between your middle knuckle to elbow) to alleviate strain
- Create a work station similar to your desk at work; the couch may not be the best place to work
- Stick to a regular schedule, similar to your work hours; try to disconnect from work as you normally would
- If these recommendations don't improve eye or vision comfort, consult with your optometrist

Additionally, adults who wear bifocals or progressive addition lenses may notice increased eye and neck strain or blur while working on the computer. They also may find they are raising their heads or enlarging the font size to see the screen. Many are working in non-traditional office settings with computers placed on different surfaces. In these cases, it is important to visit your optometrist and discuss any problems. There are a variety of lens options such as eyeglasses and contact lenses that may help.



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