

For your eyes only

Thursday was World Sight Day, a fine time to start taking care of your vision. Dr Vandana Jain lists some basic steps on how to do it

Computers have made our work simpler but have complicated our health, by introducing new problems. Tiredness of eyes, temporary weak vision, dry, irritated eyes, light sensitivity and muscular problems are common conditions caused by excessive computer use, and are collectively known as computer vision syndrome.

Staring at a monitor for long hours is like doing continuous push-ups of the focusing muscles, leading to burning and tired eyes. A dry environment and dehydration are two other culprits at the workplace that can worsen the problem. Also, people often forget to blink when they are working on the computer. People who have any refractive error are more likely to develop computer vision syndrome.

While it is virtually impossible to give up using computers, there are basics steps you can take to protect your eyes and ease the strain:

- **Give your muscles adequate rest.** Look away from the computer screen every 10-15 minutes and focus for 5-10 seconds on a distant object. Get up and take a short walk, a 5-10 minute break every hour.
- **Adjust the light entering the eyes.** Glare screen filters, anti-reflective coating on the lenses of glasses and proper lighting can reduce eyestrain and glare. Close drapes or blinds to decrease light



Foresight: Look away from the computer screen once in a while — DNA

and reflections from external light. Turn off bright overhead lights. Adjust the contrast between the background and the characters on the screen by adjusting the brightness on the computer screen.

- **Avoid dehydration of eyes and body.** Frequent blinking is necessary. Lubricating drops can also help. Drink a lot of water.
- **Maintain proper posture.** Keep back straight and shoulders relaxed, adjust workstation and chair to the correct height. Consider investing in ergonomic

your health

furniture for proper screen locations and posture. Place written pages on a stand next to the

- monitor and light it properly.
- **Computer glasses may help.** These are prescription glasses to be worn when working on a computer. Not only do they correct blurred vision, they also relieve symptoms caused by struggling to focus, such as headaches, eyestrain and tired eyes.

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