



Thomas P. Finley, OD

Dr. Finley received his Bachelor of Science degree from St. Francis College in Pennsylvania, and his Doctorate of Optometry from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry. Following graduation, he served as an optometrist in the U.S. Air Force and was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal and the Commendation Medal.

Dr. Finley has served as an adjunct clinical professor for three optometry schools and has been a clinical investigator for two major contact lens companies. He has published several articles in professional and trade journals and local newspapers, as well as lectured at many conferences throughout the area.

Dr. Finley is a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry, a Fellow of the Virginia Academy of Optometry, and a member of the American Optometric Association, Virginia Optometric Association, Northern Virginia Optometric Society, and Armed Forces Optometric Society. He is an Advisory Board member for TLC Laser Eye Centers, and area Administrator for Vision Source, a national network of independent optometrists.

Locally, Dr. Finley serves as an active member of the Herndon Rotary Club (past president), Chamber of Commerce (past board member), Optimist Club (youth sports' coach), Knights of Columbus (past board member), and current board member for the Jeannie Schmidt Free Clinic. He was awarded Herndon's "Distinguished Service Award," the Chamber of Commerce's "Small Business of the Year Award," and The Times Newspapers "Best Eye Doctor Award." He has owned his practice in Herndon since 1989.

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Eye Exercises To Improve Visual Efficiency

By Thomas P. Finley, OD

We use our eyes every waking hour of every day. It's important to make certain our eyes remain healthy and are seeing their best at all distances. With so many of us spending hours every day on computers, cell phones, and tablets, the strain placed on our eyes and vision is at an all-time high. Below are several eye exercises that can be performed daily to help improve visual efficiency and reduce eyestrain.

20-20-20

This is a new campaign to reduce eyestrain for those performing lots of close viewing activities (three feet and closer). Every 20 minutes, take a 20 second break and look at something at least 20 feet away. Looking out a window works best. This allows the focusing system of the eyes to relax and extend the time before the eyes become fatigued.

Large Lazy Eights

Extend your arm in front of you. Look at your thumb nail. Keep your eyes focused on your thumb nail while you slowly move and rotate your hand in a large figure eight pattern. Keep

your head and neck still. Do ten rotations in one slow exaggerated direction then ten rotations in the reverse direction. This helps with the fluidity of the eye movements when looking left, right, up and down.

Dynamic Visual Acuity

While you're in the passenger seat of your car (not when driving), practice viewing approaching signs and try reading them as quickly as possible. Do the same with approaching and passing license plates. This forces your eyes to quickly and accurately locate, fixate and comprehend objects while moving.

Peripheral Awareness

Make a deliberate effort to be aware of your side vision while you're looking straight ahead and performing a specific task. Test yourself to determine how well you did. Oftentimes in stressful situations, our peripheral vision constricts to tunnel vision and we're completely unaware of our surroundings.

Distance-Near-Distance Rock

Hold a book, magazine or homemade chart at a normal reading distance (about 16 inches). Have a target with detailed letters or numbers about

10 feet or more away. Read a line or two from your book. Look at the distance target and make certain the letters/numbers are clear. Keep looking for five to ten seconds. Return to viewing your book for another five to ten seconds. Keep rocking back and forth for a full minute always making certain you can see clearly. This forces your eyes to focus up close and relax looking far away and can help improve flexibility.

Breathe and Break

Sometimes just taking a few second break, taking a few deep breaths, and blinking allows the eyes to relax a bit and see better.

The muscles that move and focus our eyes are very similar to other muscles of our body. They'll also tire and become fatigued with chronic strain. The above eye exercises can help improve visual skills and increase the time before the eyes become strained. These are very simple and effective exercises.

For more complicated and involved eye-movement, motor and eye-focusing difficulties, please see a developmental doctor who specializes in eye exercises and visual therapy.

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