Staring at the computer all day... okay for my eyes? [1]

Alice,

My eyes feel dry and swollen after hours of staring at the computer monitor. Is there any long range harm caused by spending both work and play time in front of the computer? I work out, and eat a healthy, low-fat diet. I don't have any other vices except perhaps a higher than normal caffeine intake.

?Computer nerd

Answer

Dear Computer nerd,

Whether you are a computer nerd, geek, or brain, you likely will not have to worry about long-term damage to the eyes from many hours spent at the computer. You may experience some minor health concerns, such as dry eyes, but fear not? there are preventive measures that a person can take to help alleviate discomfort from long hours in front of a screen.

Computer Vision Syndrome is a recently recognized condition among computer users and includes five major symptoms: Eye strain, headaches, blurred vision, dry eyes, and neck and/or back pain. Computer screens, as well as computer environments (offices, neon lighting, ergonomically poor computer desks, etc.) are the major contributing factors. The good news is that the American Academy of Ophthalmology considers video display terminals (VDTs), aka computer monitors, to be safe for normal use, presenting no hazard to the eye. There is no convincing experimental or epidemiological evidence that exposure to VDTs results in cataracts or any other serious damage to the eye.

Adjustments that can be made to help alleviate some of the eye irritation and fatigue that you may feel after working on the computer for long periods of time include:

- Make sure the computer monitor is at least 20 inches away from your eyes.
- Use the 20/20/20 rule: After 20 minutes of computer use, look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds.
- Place your screen and document holder at the same distance from your eyes to avoid constant changes of focus.
- Adjust lighting in the workspace/room to reduce glare.
- Adjust screen intensity to sharpen images.
- Use a monitor with adjustable contrast and brightness.
• Place your screen at a viewing angle of 15 to 35 degrees below your horizontal eye level.
• For those working in offices with windows, make sure the window is located to the left or right of the worker (not behind or in front of the monitor).

Taking a breather? er, blinker every now and then can keep you typing, surfing, reading, designing, studying, watching, playing, and more. Happy computing!

Alice!
Category:
General Health [2]
Body Maintenance [3]
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Published date:
May 18, 1995
Last reviewed on:
Jan 31, 2014