Can chronic eyestrain cause blindness? [1]

Dear Alice,

Can chronic eyestrain (e.g., reading proofs eight hours a day) lead to blindness?

Answer

Dear Reader,

While eyestrain (eye muscle soreness caused by overuse) may have you wanting to turn the page on your career, it won't do permanent harm to your vision. Symptoms of eyestrain are the body's way of telling us to give our baby blues (or browns, greens, or grays) a rest. They include:

- Sore and/or tired eyes (e.g., itchiness, dryness, redness, tearing, or other discomfort)
- Headaches
- Backaches
- Problems focusing the eyes

A fifteen-minute break every couple of hours or so will help restore optimal ocular operation. Perhaps you can make eye happiness a mandatory part of your work day. The following eye revitalizers may be helpful in getting your eyes back in shape:

- Rest the eyes by closing them gently and loosely. While maintaining a relaxed face, use the palms to enclose the eyes in greater darkness. Throughout, breathe slowly and deeply.
- Keeping the head steady, stretch the eyes by looking from side-to-side, upwards, downwards, and crossways. Clockwise and counter-clockwise circular movements are also good. All eye movements need to be done slowly and smoothly. Do each exercise three times.
- Slowly open and close the eyes at least ten times. Then increase the pace for at least another ten blinks done softly. Relax with a massage of the temples using the fingertips to finish the activity.

Keeping your eyes happy and healthy could contribute to greater work productivity as well. So if they are feeling fatigued, don't hesitate to relax and regenerize those peepers.

Alice!

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Published date:
Apr 13, 2001
Last reviewed on:
Jul 28, 2015

Source URL: http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/can-chronic-eyestrain-cause-blindness#comment-0

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