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LIFE

5 Tips for Preventing Digital Eye Strain

The smartphones, computers and TVs we use every day help us boost efficiency and enjoy modern conveniences. But looking at screens for even a short amount time can lead to digital eye strain, one of the biggest contributors to deteriorating vision.

Take a look at these five healthy vision tips that you can use to decrease the strain on your eyes:

1. Make sure any computer screens and external monitors you use are at eye level. Also, try to keep them away from bright lights and windows to reduce glare on the screen.
2. When using screens, follow the 20-20-20 rule—every 20 minutes, look at something that’s 20 feet away for 20 seconds. This gives your eyes time to relax and readjust.
3. See if the devices you use have the option to shift to warmer or more natural color tones. The blue light normally emitted by screens can irritate your eyes over time and throw off your circadian rhythm.
4. Clean your screens regularly so your eyes don’t have to subconsciously work harder to make out images.
5. Consider changing your schedule if you notice your vision is getting significantly worse by the end of the day. This is can be a sign of computer vision syndrome, a condition caused by long periods of uninterrupted screen viewing.
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HOME

Home Fire Escape Plans

Many people wrongly assume that they'll have plenty of time to escape from their home if they notice fire. The reality is that the modern, synthetic materials that are commonly found in most homes mean that fires burn faster than ever. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, a small flame can turn into an uncontrollable fire in less than 30 seconds.

Planning ahead for a fire can be the difference between being trapped in your home and escaping safely. Make sure to incorporate these elements into your escape plan:

- Go over how to escape each room in your home. Ideally, every room will have at least two ways to get out through a door or window.
- Don't waste time trying to save your personal belongings. Take any important medications if they're within arm's reach, then immediately take the closest exit.
- Before opening a door, use the back of your hand to feel its temperature at the top, the doorknob and the crack between the frame and the door. If any of those areas feel hot, take a different route. If the door is cool, brace yourself against it and open it slowly.
- If you can't avoid moving through smoke, crawl as low to the ground as you can and cover your mouth.
- Set a meeting place outside of your home that your family knows to gather around when they're safe. Then, have one person go to the nearest neighbor's house to call 911.
- Never go back into a burning building for any reason.

AUTO

Avoiding Animal Collisions

One of the most dangerous driving hazards are animal collisions. Because animals often react unpredictably, drivers can frequently misjudge their speed, direction and distance. Plus, sudden turns to avoid an animal could send a vehicle into surrounding traffic.

Here are some quick tips to avoid collisions:

- Use extra caution when driving through heavily wooded areas or near natural sources of water.
- Slow down if you see an animal near the road. Even if you see it leave the area, be sure to pay attention for others in the area.
- Apply the brakes if there's an animal in your path. Swerving could put you in the path of another vehicle or hazard.
- Turn on your high beams at night so animals are easier to see.
- Don't leave your vehicle if you hit an animal. Even if it appears to be lying still, it may still be alive and potentially dangerous. Instead, call your local police department or the state patrol.

In The Know

Buying and Selling Online

It's easier than ever to buy or sell things on online platforms like Craigslist and the Facebook Marketplace. However, you always need to be careful when meeting strangers to exchange purchases.

These simple steps can help protect you when completing an online purchase in person:

- Only finish an exchange during daylight hours.
- Bring a friend or family member with you during exchanges.
- See if there's a designated location for completing exchanges in your area. Local police departments have started to set up safe, open spots that are under video surveillance in order to make exchanges easier.
- Never agree to meet a stranger at a private residence or in a place that you're unfamiliar with.
- Don't provide buyers or sellers with any personal information that's unnecessary for the exchange.

INSIGHTS