



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Orthoptic exercises

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

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Introduction

This information leaflet is a reminder of the exercises you were given at your orthoptic appointment.

Why have I been given exercises?

Many people have a tendency to squint, which is controlled most of the time but may give headaches, blurred vision, double vision and eye strain symptoms. The exercises can help your eyes line up better and focus more quickly. Sometimes exercises are given after eye surgery. The orthoptist; a health professional trained in visual development and eye movement, supervises the exercises and will advise which exercise is appropriate. You will be seen regularly to monitor the success of treatment.

How long will I need to do the exercises for?

Initially the orthoptist will review you every few weeks to monitor improvement in your eye control and to change your exercises as your progress. Most patients will complete the exercises within a few months, depending on the severity of symptoms.

Is it normal for my eyes to hurt whilst doing my exercises?

Often, particularly when exercises are first started, your eyes feel like they are pulling, and symptoms may even seem worse. This is because you are making your eye muscles work hard. This feeling often gets less as the eye muscles strengthen.

What happens if I do eye exercises, but my symptoms do not get better?

If your symptoms do not improve, then the orthoptist will review you again and see if a change of treatment or a review with the ophthalmologist (eye doctor) is necessary.

Relaxing your eyes after exercising

It is important to relax your eyes after each time you do your exercises. Failing to do so, in rare instances, can induce a convergence spasm, where the eyes become crossed and cannot be easily pulled into a straighter position. Relaxing your eyes is done by closing them for a few minutes or by looking into the distance.

Exercises

Smooth Convergence □

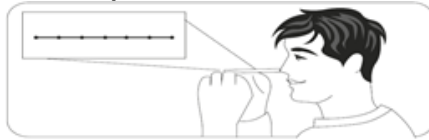
The aim of this exercise is to be able to bring a target as close to your nose as possible whilst maintaining just one image of the target.

- Holding the target at arm's length and in a slightly depressed position, focus on the target.
- Bring the target slowly towards your nose whilst keeping one, single target at all times.
- When the target becomes two, move the target back slightly to achieve one image of the target again.
- Repeat the exercises for approximately 3-5 minutes, 4-5 times a day. Relax your eyes after each period of exercise.

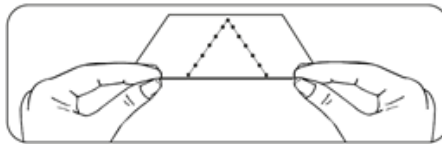
Dot Card □

The aim of this exercise is to maintain a single image of each dot on the card.

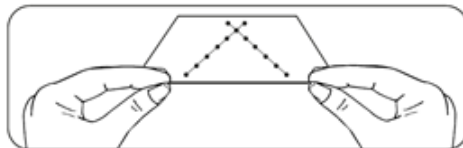
- Hold the card flat so that one end of the card is touching the end of your nose; hold the card in a slightly depressed position.



- Look at the furthest dot. If your eyes are working together well, the dot you are looking at will be seen as just one dot and the other dots will form an 'A' shape.



- Try to focus on the next dot which is closer to you. As you do this, you will see that as well as the lines meeting at the dot, they will fan out beyond it creating an 'X' shape.



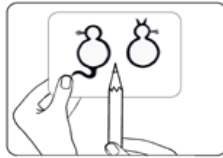
- Try to continue focussing on the closer dots in sequence until you can complete the exercise with the dot closest to your nose.
- Repeat the exercises for approximately 3-5 minutes, 4-5 times a day. Relax your eyes after each period of exercise.

Stereograms ☐

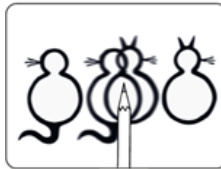
The aim of this exercise is to improve the eyes ability to work together as a pair. Your orthoptist will advise you on which method you should carry out.

Near Method ☐

- Hold the cat card at arm's length at eye level.
- In the other hand hold a pen approximately half way between your face and the card.



- Focus on the tip of the pen ensuring it is a single image.
- When focussing on the tip of the pen the cats on the card will look like they are moving apart.



- The aim is to be able to see three cats behind the pen on the card while still looking at the pen tip.
- The third image of the cat will appear between the two printed ones and look like this:



Distance Method □

- Hold the card at arm's length and focus on an image in the far distance over the top of the card (for example, a chimney on a roof).
- When focussing on the far object the cats on the card will look like they are moving apart (see image 2 of 'Near Method').
- The aim is to be able to see three cats on the card while still looking at the far object.
- The third image of the cat will appear between the two printed ones (see image 3 of 'Near Method').

Contact numbers

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Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

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telephone 01904 726750.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

Owner	Gemma Kane, Specialist Orthoptist
Date first issued	September 2018
Review Date	July 2028
Version	2 (reissued July 2025)
Approved by	Patricia McCready, Orthoptic & Optical Service Manager
Document Reference	PIL1270 v2.3
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