



York Teaching Hospital  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Orthoptic exercises

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

## **Orthoptic Department**

York Hospital  
Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

Telephone: 01904 726750

Scarborough Hospital  
Woodlands Drive, Scarborough, YO12 6QL

Telephone: 01723 342057



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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 □

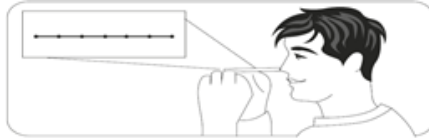
The aim of this exercise is to be able to bring a target as close to your nose as possible whilst maintaining just one image of the target.

- 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.

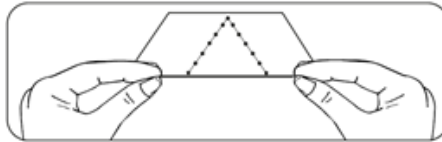
## Dot Card □

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

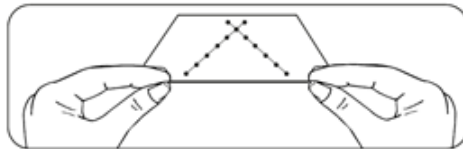
- Hold the card flat so that one end of the card is touching the end of your nose; hold the card in a slightly depressed position.



- 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.



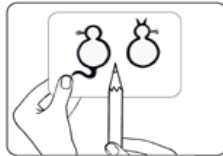
- Try to continue focussing on the closer dots in sequence until you can complete the exercise with the dot closest to your nose.
- Repeat the exercises for approximately 3-5 minutes, 4-5 times a day. Relax your eyes after each period of exercise.

# Stereograms □

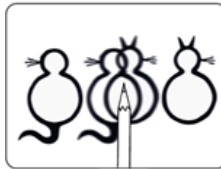
The aim of this exercise is to improve the eyes ability to work together as a pair. Your orthoptist will advise you on which method you should carry out.

## Near Method □

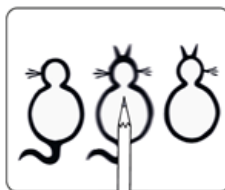
- Hold the cat card at arm's length at eye level.
- In the other hand hold a pen approximately half way between your face and the card.



- 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

## York Hospital

Patricia McCready	01904 726749
Sian Jones	01904 726747
Lucy Ridgeon	01904 726751
Gemma Kane	01904 726750

## Scarborough Hospital

Chris Alletson	01723 342057
Andrew Emmerson	01723 342057
Jayne Mills	01723 342057

## **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:

Gemma Kane, Orthoptic Department,  
York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or  
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 [pals@york.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@york.nhs.uk).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

Please telephone or email if you require this information in a different language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio.

如果你要求本資 不同的 或 式提供，電  
或發電

Jeżeli niniejsze informacje potrzebne są w innym języku lub formacie, należy zadzwonić lub wysłać wiadomość e-mail

Bu bilgileri değişik bir lisanda ya da formatta istiyorsanız lütfen telefon ediniz ya da e-posta gönderiniz

Telephone: 01904 725566

Email: [access@york.nhs.uk](mailto:access@york.nhs.uk)

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