

# A “Site” for Sore Eyes

**Staring at a computer screen for hours at a time can result in fatigue, eyestrain, headaches and other problems.**

**The lighting in your work area, work area arrangements and use of corrective eyewear can make computer use more comfortable for your eyes.**

**These are signs of eye problems that can be caused by poor lighting of a computer workstation:**

- Burning, itching, dryness, excessive teariness and soreness of the eyes or eyelids are the types of eye discomfort which might be associated with poor lighting.
- Excessive blinking, squinting, difficulty in seeing, double or blurred vision and trouble with focusing can also indicate eyestrain from computer work.
- Even headaches, backaches, fatigue, dizziness and indigestion can indicate eyestrain from a poorly-arranged computer workstation.



**Here are some ideas for better viewing of your computer screen and hard copy:**

- The top of the computer monitor's screen should be located at or slightly below eye level. If you have to look up to see the top of the computer screen, you put a strain on your neck as you tilt your head back.
- If you are keying information from hard copy, don't just lay the paper beside the keyboard. Instead, it should be held by a document platform, that goes in between the monitor and keyboard tray. By keeping the document directly in front of you, this minimizes the amount your head needs to turn from side to side.
- Adjust the screen brightness and contrast for comfort and clarity.
- The computer should be placed at right angles to any windows. Light from windows either ahead of or behind the computer is distracting.
- Less room light is needed for computer work than for paperwork. The room lighting should be about the same level as the lighting of the computer screen. If the overhead lighting is too bright, replace it with softer task lighting.
- If there are reflections on the screen from lamps and overhead lights, angle the computer monitor down to reduce reflections.
- Give your eyes frequent rest breaks. Follow the 20/20 rule: every 20 minutes, look 20 feet away to change your focus. Every hour or two, take a break from the computer.
- When you are working around a computer screen, chances are you do not blink as often as you usually would. Make an effort to blink more frequently to prevent the discomfort of dry eyes.
- Have regular eye exams so you can keep your corrective prescription up-to-date.
- If you wear corrective lenses, make sure they are appropriate for computer distances. Ordinary glasses and contact lenses may be good for distance or close-up vision, but not for the middle distance view of a computer screen. Inexpensive alternatives to purchasing full frame computer glasses exist.

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***You will work more comfortably and efficiently if you practice computer eye care.***

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For more information about these or other ergonomic issues, contact EH&S, Risk Management at 392-1591