Eye Health Guidance in the Workplace

A User Guide Study Companion

With screen time levels rising almost 20% over the past 10 years, today's workday for many begins and ends on a digital device. If you've noticed your eyes glazing over at the end of a long day, it might be because our eyes haven't evolved to keep up with our use of modern technology. It's clear prolonged hours on screens impact our eyes, but what's less known is how unmanaged excessive screen time* impacts our individual wellbeing, productivity, and the health system.

In partnership with Deloitte Economics Institute, the American Optometric Association released a report, *The impact of unmanaged excessive screen time in the United States*, to understand the implications of unmanaged screen time among American workers.

Here are a few key findings from the report:

About 104 million Americans are exposed to excessive screen time, 70% of those individuals working in office jobs.

The cost of symptoms relating to excessive screen time exposure is estimated to be **$702 per person.**

An estimated 31.8 million people exposed to excessive screen time **did not see an optometrist in the last 12 months**, and half (55%) reported vision-related symptoms that may be improved or resolved from regular visits to the optometrist.

Seeing an optometrist once per year could potentially benefit individuals **up to $1,920 each**

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Your Eyes Have a Workday Slump Too

Two hours of screen viewing each day can lead to dry eyes, blurred vision, headaches, back, and neck pain, collectively known as digital eye strain.

5 Quick Tips to Help Your Eyes Work Smarter, Not Harder

Here are some tips for avoiding digital eye strain at home and at the office:

1. **Get annual eye exams.**
   Annual comprehensive eye exams by an AOA doctor of optometry are essential to ensure healthy eyes. The earlier a vision problem is detected and treated, the more likely it is that treatment will be successful. Find an AOA doctor near you!

2. **Angles matter.**
   Your computer screen should be 15 to 20 degrees below eye level (about 4 or 5 inches) as measured from the center of the screen, and 20 to 28 inches from the eyes.

3. **Get into position.**
   Chairs should be comfortably padded and conform to the body, and chair height adjusted so the feet rest flat on the floor. For correct typing form, arm rests should be adjusted to provide support, and wrists shouldn't rest on the keyboard.

4. **Take a break.**
   Rest your eyes by taking a break from your screen for 15 minutes after 2 hours of continuous device use. Also, practice the 20-20-20 rule: for every 20 minutes of computer viewing, gaze at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds to relax the eye muscles.

5. **Blink!**
   To minimize the chances of developing dry eye when using a computer, try to blink frequently. Blinking keeps the front surface of the eye moist. Setting a reminder on your device may help establish this as a healthy habit. To learn more eye-friendly tips and habits, check out AOA's eye-friendly mobile game Blink Land.

   Learn more tips to prevent digital eye strain and visit AOA.org/EyeDeserveMore to dive further into the report findings.

The report defines unmanaged excessive screen time as seven or more hours of screen time per day and not having visited an optometrist regularly to assess and manage eye health.

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