

# Information for patients and carers

## Home exercises: Relaxation

Treatment of convergence insufficiency

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three overlapping, wavy bands of blue color, transitioning from a lighter blue at the top to a darker blue at the bottom.

## What is relaxation?

It is important to relax the eye muscles adequately following exercising.

**Note:** this is just as important as doing the exercises themselves.

After the exercises, make sure you either:

- Close your eyes for one minute

OR

- Look far into the distance (e.g., look out of the window) for a minute, before doing any other activity

If you are doing certain exercises, such as stereograms, the orthoptist may teach you a relaxation exercise based on the cards you have been given.

## Why do I need to relax my eyes after performing the recommended exercises?

- Relaxing your eyes will avoid causing problems such as convergence spasm, where the eyes become crossed and cannot easily be pulled into a straight position. A convergence spasm can occur in very rare cases if some of the eye muscles fail to relax sufficiently. Therefore, to reduce the risk of this, it is important to relax your eyes after doing the exercises
- The eyes may feel uncomfortable following exercising, such as feeling strained, and this is to be expected. However, prolonged exercising and/ or not enough relaxation may make the eyes feel more uncomfortable than is necessary

## Key points to remember:

- As with any form of new exercise, your eyes may feel more tired or uncomfortable and you may get a headache when you first begin exercising. This is because you are using muscles that are not used to working as hard as they should be. This is normal and it will get easier as the muscles get stronger
- Do not practice for longer periods than advised by the orthoptist
- Try to avoid exercising when your eyes are particularly tired, or you are unwell
- Always follow instructions carefully and ask if you are unsure about anything
- If you are in any doubt about the exercises that you have been given, ask the orthoptist to demonstrate them to you again at your next visit
- The orthoptist will advise you how often and how long the exercise should be performed during your appointment

**It is important that you attend your Orthoptic appointments as advised by the orthoptist to monitor whether the exercises are helping to improve your condition and adjust the exercises given as needed. If you are unable to attend an appointment, please call our appointments team on telephone number: 01772 524010.**

## Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact the Orthoptic team on telephone number: **01772 522417** (Monday to Friday between 8.30am to 4.40pm). If the Orthoptists are not available when you call, there is a 24-hour answerphone where you may leave a message.

Orthoptic Department:  
Broughton Suite (near the main entrance),  
Royal Preston Hospital,  
Sharoe Green Lane,  
Preston.  
PR2 9HT

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

[www.squintclinic.com](http://www.squintclinic.com)

[www.orthoptics.org.uk/patients-and-public/](http://www.orthoptics.org.uk/patients-and-public/)

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