

Screen Use and the 20-20-20 Rule

CANADIAN COUNCIL
OF THE BLIND



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Staring at screens has become inevitable in today's world, whether it's for work or entertainment. Whether it's your phone, computer, TV, or a tablet at a kiosk or cashier table, screen time is a regular part of life. However, prolonged screen use can lead to vision-related problems such as strained eyes, commonly known as Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS), which comes with various unpleasant symptoms.

A study by the Nepalese Journal of Ophthalmology highlights the issue, revealing that 90% of 795 students experienced CVS symptoms after using a computer continuously for two hours. While staring at a screen won't damage your eyes, it can cause discomfort, such as sore, tired, burning, or itchy eyes, as well as dry eyes, blurred vision, headaches, and soreness in the neck, back, or shoulders.

To alleviate eye strain, consider following the 20-20-20 rule: Take a 20-second break every 20 minutes to focus on something 20 feet away from your screen. This helps your eyes relax, and during the break, drinking water or green tea can be refreshing. Green tea contains an antioxidant called catechins, which promotes tear production for proper eye lubrication.

Here are some additional tips to avoid eye strain while using screens:

1. Sit at least 25 inches or an arm's length away from the computer screen.
2. Blink frequently to produce more tears and keep your eyes lubricated.
3. Adjust the screen brightness to a comfortable level for your eyes.
4. Keep your screen clean to prevent additional strain on your eyes.

By adopting these practices, you can mitigate the discomfort caused by prolonged screen use and protect your eye health.

