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Convergence Insufficiency and Treatment Ophthalmology



What is Convergence?

Convergence is the ability to turn both eyes inwards smoothly towards the nose when looking at a near object.

Good convergence is important for comfortable binocular vision (vision with both eyes) for any close work, including reading.

What is Convergence Insufficiency (CI)?

Weakness of the eye muscles required for convergence can cause problems in allowing the eyes to work together at near distance. People may, in turn, experience symptoms when attempting close work such as:

- Blurred vision
- Double vision
- Headaches
- Eye strain or pain

Further Information

Please follow the instructions as well as the Orthoptist's advice. Ask the Orthoptist if you are unsure about anything.

Contact information:

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| St Peters Hospital | 01932 722146 |
| Ashford Hospital | 01784 884133 |
| Woking Community Hospital | 01483 846327 |
| Heart of Hounslow Health Centre | 0203 771 6112 |

Further Information

We endeavor to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty.

If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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Jump Convergence

This exercise is advised once a good near-point of convergence is achieved and maintained.

Two targets are required; one is to be held at near and the other is a target in the distance, for example a point on the wall 3 meters away, or more. The distance target stays the same throughout this exercise.

You must start by looking at the near target, ensuring comfortable single vision, then change fixation to the distance target and back to the near target. This should be repeated several times; the near target should be moved closer at each fixation. Jump convergence can also be exercised with the Dot-card by fixing on a particular dot then looking at the distance target and then back again to the next nearest dot.

After Exercising

It is very important to relax your eye muscles properly after performing eye exercises. In order to relax your eye muscles you should either close both eyes or alternatively, look far into the distance, for example out of a window, for one to two minutes. This should be done before performing any other activity.

What is the treatment for CI?

First of all, it is important to make sure a test for glasses has been performed. This may be done at a local opticians or the eye clinic, depending on your age.

If glasses have been advised or changed and your symptoms persist, then eye exercises will be recommended by the Orthoptist to strengthen weak eye muscles. It is important to do these exercises as prescribed. This is usually between 2-5 minutes each time and three times daily. Little and often is the key to success. You should also attend regular follow-up appointments to monitor your progress, approximately every 6-8 weeks.

Symptoms may become worse in the very early stages of exercising, but with continued exercising, symptoms will improve. Not doing the exercises enough will result in very little improvement, but do not over-exercise either. It is important to carry out the relaxation technique explained in the "After Exercising" section of this leaflet.

The Orthoptist will prescribe the appropriate exercises for you and may change these as your convergence improves. If your symptoms are not cured by exercises, temporary prisms may be trialled and occasionally surgery may be advised.

Exercises Explained

Pen-to-nose Convergence

The target used for this exercise is the tip of a pen/pencil or a detailed image on a stick.

The target is held at arm's length and at eye level. Your head must stay straight. You must focus on the target and ensure it is single and clear. You should then proceed to slowly bring the target closer towards the end of your nose and maintain one clear and single image.

If the target becomes double (i.e. you see two pens) STOP moving the target immediately but continue to look at it. An attempt should be made with your eyes at this point to make the target single again. A quick blink may help, but keep focusing on the target.

If this is not possible, you should move the target slightly further away until single vision is achieved. You should then proceed to move forward towards your nose again.

Dot-card Convergence

The Orthoptist will supply you with a card with dots on one side, joined by a line. The card should be held against the tip of your nose straight, or angled slightly downwards, so all the dots are visible.

Start by looking at the dot furthest away and make sure this can be seen as single. All other dots should appear as double – this is normal. It should appear as this **Λ** pattern

You should then proceed to look at the next dot closer to your nose, ensuring single vision and so on. Half way up the card an **X**-pattern may be visible where all the dots in front and behind appear as double – again this is normal.

If the dot begins to appear double, try to focus on this dot and attempt to make the dot single again. Once achieved, hold for a few seconds and move to the next dot when you are able. Alternatively, go back to the previous dot and try again.

Once you are able to, proceed to look at the dots closer to your nose. The rest of the dots on the card will appear as a **V**-pattern.

