

Eye Fatigue



Dr. Steven D'Orio | Optometrist



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Eye fatigue occurs when your eyes have been overworked beyond their capacity, often when the eye muscles fail to receive enough rest, hydration, and protection over long periods of time.

Eye fatigue usually occurs during visual tasks such as computer or device use and reading. However, it can also be associated with an individual's eyeglass prescription or be related to visual skills such as eye tracking and focusing.

Muscle fatigue occurs when the ciliary muscle, located inside the eye, is used beyond its capacity, especially for long periods of time. When fatigued, this muscle, which is responsible for adjusting the lenses in your eyes and allowing you to focus on nearby or distant objects, struggles to focus on objects.

If you are staring at an object for a long time, your ciliary muscles are prevented from contracting and relaxing, making it difficult for the lens to adjust and provide clear vision.



Another set of muscles that can become strained and overworked causing eye fatigue are the extraocular muscles. Similar to the ciliary muscles, these muscles contract and relax to give you clear and stable vision, preventing you from seeing double. When you are looking at one object for too long, these muscles can contract rapidly and become overworked. If left unchecked, eye muscle fatigue could lead to further eye health conditions.

The most common cause for eye fatigue is exposure to computer or mobile device screens. The screen's brightness can cause eye fatigue, due to an attempt at processing high or low screen brightness levels. In order to reduce eye fatigue, ensure your device's screen is set at an acceptable brightness level, and try to minimize use where possible. Avoid using screens for long periods of time without breaks.

Eye fatigue could also occur when one needs an adjustment in their prescription. Visit your eye doctor for regular checkups, or if you notice a deterioration in your vision so prescriptions remain accurate. Often, a prescription will change with time due to aging.



Eye fatigue can occur as you age due to an increased inability of the inner eye muscles to contract, called presbyopia. In this case, bifocals or progressive lenses help to minimize eye fatigue. However, if eye fatigue persists with the use of corrective eyeglasses, then a binocular dysfunction may be the cause.

Eye fatigue symptoms range from severe to mild, and can present in many ways including:

- Blurry, double, or distorted vision
- Constant eye dryness
- Eyes feel warm and sore when closed
- Frequent Headaches
- Tightness in temples, neck, and back
- Teary, watery eyes





Watch Our Video:
Eye Fatigue - EXPLAINED

If you are experiencing eye fatigue symptoms, you may be able to combat them with lifestyle changes. Adjusting your lighting, sitting further away from your screen, and reducing your exposure to screen glare could help reduce eye fatigue.



Watch Our Video:
Dr. D'Orio Symptoms | Eye Fatigue

If you must be at a screen for long periods of time, change your location, take a break, or drink some water to rehydrate your eyes and give your eye muscles a break. If you continue to experience eye fatigue after taking these steps, visit your eye doctor for an examination.





DR. GREG D'ORIO & DR. STEVEN D'ORIO

Toronto Location



North York Location



📞 Toronto: 416 656 2020

📠 Toronto Fax: 416 656 2012

✉ Email: info@drdorioeyecare.com

📞 North York: 416 661 5555

📠 North York Fax: 416 661 2594

✉ Email: infofinch@drdorioeyecare.com