

## THE 20-20-20 RULE

*to reduce the effects of digital eye strain*



Take a break  
for **20** seconds...



...and look at something  
**20** feet away...



...every **20** minutes.

*Follow the 20-20-20 rule and give your eyes a break!* **healthyssetgo.**



[4 Tips To Relieve and Reduce Eye Strain \(workplacetesting.com\)](https://www.workplacetesting.com/4-tips-to-relieve-and-reduce-eye-strain/)

### 4 Tips To Relieve and Reduce Eye Strain

Eye strain is an issue affecting a growing number of workers. For many of these workers, it is also impacting their productivity. In one recent study, eight in ten workers reported experiencing some form of eye-strain symptom in their workplace including eye fatigue, headaches, dry eyes and blurred vision. Four in ten employees in the same study confessed that their eye issues were making them less productive. Nearly one third took additional breaks because of it, and

another third reported difficulties in focusing while at work.

#### Causes

Several factors are combining to make eye strain a severe workplace safety issue. Evolution is one of these factors. Our eyes are designed for the distance-oriented jobs of the past. However, we are doing an increasing amount of visual tasks in which the focal point is much closer to our eyes. The prevalence of computers and other screens is compounding the issue. So, too, is the fact that the working population is aging and therefore more susceptible to eye strain.

Eye strain occurs when eye muscles are either overused or held in one position for too long. Muscles become tired. Concentrating on specific tasks that require visual focus will also cause inner eye muscles to tighten and become overly tired.

#### Symptoms of eye strain can include:

- Sore or itchy eyes
- Difficulty focusing
- Headaches

- Blurred vision
- Dry or burning eyes
- Red, watery eyes
- Light sensitivity
- Eyelid twitching

Digital eye strain, caused by extensive use of a digital device such as a computer, tablet or phone, is the most well-known form of eye strain. However, eye strain isn't confined to offices. It is also a significant issue in many industries from construction to manufacturing and from mining to long haul trucking. Any job that requires workers to focus their vision for long periods can put them at risk for eye strain, as can several environmental factors.



## 4 Tips To Relieve and Reduce Eye Strain (continued)

There are also a variety of physical factors which can lead to eye strain.

They can include:

- Screen glare
- Blue light from digital screens
- Incorrect safety glasses
- Poor industrial lighting that is either too dim or excessively bright
- Poor posture
- Dry air

Despite these risks, there are things you can do to help both relieve and reduce eye strain.

### Implement a 20-20-20 Rule

Insist on the 20-20-20 rule for your workers tied to a computer screen for most of the workday. Encourage these employees to take a twenty-second rest break, every twenty minutes to look at something that is at least twenty feet away. Post reminders about the 20-20-20 rules in employee break rooms and regular online communication venues.

Encourage your desk workers to take regular eye “rest breaks” every few hours. And, while you are reminding your workers to rest their eyes, remind them to blink. When workers stare at screens for long periods, they frequently forget to blink, which leads to dry eyes and exacerbates eye strain.

### Reduce Environmental Factors

There is quite a lot you can do within your work environment to both reduce and relieve eye strain. Most are basic engineering controls that require minimal effort and expense.

- Assess your lighting for its effect on eye strain and worker safety. Fluorescent lighting, while bright, tends to contribute to both eye strain and blurry vision. Natural light is better, but where that isn't possible, other, more ergonomic choices, can help you avoid both the dimly lit and overly bright workspaces that lead to eye strain.
- Provide curtains, blinds or other filters to prevent glare.
- Paint walls in dark colors to help reduce glare and use matte finishes on walls, floors and furniture.
- Avoid placing workstations directly in front of heat vents, fans or air conditioners as these can contribute to dry eyes.
- If your workplace is overly dry, consider installing a humidification system or supply office workers with desktop humidifiers.
- Increase the font size to at least several fonts larger than what the user can comfortably see.
- Adjust screen brightness to reduce glare. When this isn't possible, consider glare filters, which can decrease the amount of light from the screen.
- Adjust screen brightness on computers and other screens to the same level of brightness as the room. Eyes must work extra hard to read screens that are brighter or dimmer than the work environment.
- Install devices to reduce the amount of blue light emitting from screens.

### Adjust Your Screens

If you haven't done so already, do an ergonomic assessment of your workplace, paying particular attention to the layout of your desk areas and lighting. Implement changes that will reduce eye strain for your employees:

- For optimal vision, position computer and other screens directly in front of users, at a distance of 20 to 26 inches (50 -65 centimeters) from the eyes.
- Ensure the angle of view for computer screens is about four or five inches below eye level.

### Educate Your Workforce

Educating your workers about the causes and effects of eye strain and the preventative measures they can take to reduce it, benefits everyone. In addition to education about ergonomic and other controls, encourage workers feeling the effects of eye strain to have their vision checked for other causes and to consider their use of screens while off work. Those with prescription eyewear who work with digital screens may want to consider the addition of a blue light filter to their glasses.

While eye strain can create discomfort and reduce productivity, the good news is that it does not typically lead to any long-term eye damage. A proactive approach to reducing eye strain in the workplace can go a long way toward reducing discomfort and restoring productivity.

### [Sleep: An Important Health and Safety Concern at Work \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealth/)



Use the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Workplace Health Resource Center** to see whether a sleep intervention is right for your work site.

1. Assessment. What information about my employees and my worksite can I use to select an appropriate sleep intervention?
2. Planning and Management. How will I empower and encourage my employees to participate?
3. Implementation. What supports do I need to put in place to make the intervention a success?
4. Evaluation. How will I measure whether the intervention is successful and sustainable?





## Negative Effects of Sleep Deprivation

- 🕒 Decrease in productivity and decision making
- 🕒 Impaired memory and cognitive brain functions
- 🕒 Reduction in reaction times and motor skills
- 🕒 Impaired vision
- 🕒 Exaggerated emotions or mood
- 🕒 Greater risk of injury or automobile accidents

[Sleep Deprivation's Effect on Employee Workplace Safety—Optisom Sleep Health Platform](#)

### Effect of Sleep on Safety

#### Sleep on Safety

A good night's sleep prepares the body for physical and mental alertness. Deprived of rest, important cognitive processes become slowed, dull, and less responsive. This creates a perfect storm for workplace disaster. Indeed, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies reports that people struggling with sleep have a much higher risk for accidents.

Many companies are one good night's sleep away from a serious, costly, and preventable workplace accident. Even if your employees aren't flying planes or operating heavy machinery, they could make poor decisions resulting in accidents involving themselves or others. Even one slip-and-fall involving a sleepy worker could result in extremely costly (and avoidable) litigation for your company.

**\$31 Billion** estimated cost of sleep-related workplace accidents and mistakes  
**Sleep and Safety**

Harvard Medical School reports that sleep deprivation critically impairs job performance, with potentially disastrous results. Sleep sharpens our cognitive ability, enabling us to think fast, act fast, and act smart. When your employees suffer insomnia, they are less capable in the workplace environment. This can lead to dangerous and costly workplace accidents.

In 2010, a sleep-deprived pilot caused a Boeing 737 crash in southern India, killing 158 people. In recent decades, numerous high-profile accidents reported in national media were determined to be related to sleep deprivation, costing precious human lives. No employer can afford that statistic.

**20% of all serious car crash injuries are associated with driver sleepiness**



#### Sleep Deprivation Impacts Safety

Without sleep, the human body becomes less predictable. Highly fatigued workers are 70 percent more likely to be involved in workplace accidents compared to workers with lower fatigue levels. One beer has the same impact on a person with 4 hours of sleep as six beers on a well-rested person.

The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies estimates the cost of automobile accidents attributed to sleepiness to fall between \$29.2 billion and \$37.9 billion. Driver sleepiness is associated with 20 percent of all serious car crashes.

**One beer has the same impact on a person with four hours of sleep as six beers on a well-rested person**



#### What is Sleep Deprivation Costing Your Company?

Who pays the price for sleepless nights? Unfortunately, employers often become legally and financially responsible for workplace accidents. Sleep deprivation puts everything important into slow motion – but accelerates costs for companies. Sleep-related workplace accidents and mistakes cost U.S. companies an estimated \$31 billion due to accidents and mistakes.

The media often portrays OSA and related insomnia as causing horrific workplace accidents in the fields of transportation and heavy industry. That's indisputably true, but it's also true that OSA directly affects safety in your own company. Estimates place OSA-related safety costs at between \$5 billion to \$20 billion annually. Without a doubt, you're paying the price.

**Highly fatigued workers are 70% more likely to be involved in accidents**

