

## Patient Information

# Convergence exercises

### When are convergence exercises recommended?

If you are unable to converge your eyes easily (pull them in to look at your nose), you may experience symptoms such as double vision, blurring and headaches, especially when attempting reading and other close work. Exercises to help with convergence may improve these symptoms.

### What are they?

There are a variety of different exercises which all improve convergence. The Orthoptist will explain and demonstrate the exercises you should be practicing. Some are very simple, e.g. looking at the tip of a pen at arm's length and bringing it closer to your nose while keeping your head still and the image clear.

Your Orthoptist will decide if you need to wear your glasses when performing the exercises or whether you need prisms to help you initially.

These exercises should be carried out at least 3 times per day but only for 3 to 4 minutes per session.

When you have finished a session, you need to relax your eyes by staring out of a window or looking at a distant object for a couple of minutes.

### 1. Pen convergence

Hold a pen at arm's length and look at the tip of the pen. Slowly move the pen towards the end of your nose, keeping the tip single and clear.

As soon as the pen becomes blurred or double, stop moving it and try and clear it. If this is impossible move it away a short distance until it becomes clear and single and then start slowly moving it towards you again, trying each time to bring it closer.

### 2. Jump convergence

Hold the pen at a point where you can comfortably see it singly, then look at a distant object eg. a picture detail across the room. While you are fixing on the distant object, move the pen just a little bit closer to you. Then look at the pen. Next look again in the distance and while you are looking in the distance bring the pen a little bit closer to you. Repeat until you have moved the pen as close as possible to your nose and still able to keep it clear and single.

### 3. Dot card

Hold the card up to your nose and look at the spot at the end furthest from your nose. The spot should be single with an elongated, upside down "V" coming from it - the spot should seem to emanate from the point of the "V".

Once you have achieved this move onto the next spot, getting it single and seeing a long thin "X" going through the centre of it.

As you progress nearer to your nose, the "X" will fatten out. The object is to get the spot that is closest to your nose as possible without it becoming double.

### 4. Stereograms

There are several forms:

- a) cats
- b) buckets
- c) 3D circles

Using the cats as the example (as this is the easiest for the patient to do,) you need to hold the card at arm's length.

Hold a pen tip in the mid-line of their bodies and slowly bring the pen towards your nose. An image of each cat should start to break away from the original so that there appears to be 4 cats on the page.

The object of this test is to keep looking at the pen and just to be aware of the 4 behind, without directly looking at them. You need to move the pen so that the 2 images in the middle actually join to become a 3rd cat that has 2 sets of whiskers, a tail and ears.

This is a difficult exercise and may take a little time to perfect. Once the 3rd image is achieved, it can be rather blurred, so the first thing is to get it nice and clear.

Once you have managed this, some people can remove the pen and still keep the clear 3rd cat.

There are also, as mentioned earlier, other variations on the cat stereograms which will be given to you by the Orthoptist.

These are the basic exercises and are usually successful if done diligently and regularly ( a little and often). Other members of the family can join in as there is usually someone else in the family who struggles!

### **Will I need to see the Orthoptist again?**

The Orthoptist will want to see you regularly to monitor the treatment and ensure the convergence and your symptoms are improving. Appointments are usually very regular initially, gradually becoming less frequent as your convergence improves.

### **How long will I need to continue the exercises?**

This depends on the extent of the reduced convergence and how well the exercises are going. It may only take a matter of one or two months before you can stop the exercises, although in some cases it may take much longer.

### **Contact details**

If you have any questions about your treatment plan or problems with the exercises and you would like to speak to your Orthoptist, please telephone the appropriate Orthoptic Department:

Worcester Royal Hospital: 01905 760430

Alexandra Hospital: 01527 503030 ext 44124

Princess of Wales Community Hospital: 01527 488087

Kidderminster Treatment Centre: 01562 512388

### **Other information**

The following internet websites contain information that you may find useful.

- [www.worcsacute.nhs.uk](http://www.worcsacute.nhs.uk)  
Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust
- [www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)  
Information fact sheets on health and disease
- [www.rcoa.ac.uk](http://www.rcoa.ac.uk)  
Information leaflets by the Royal College of Anaesthetists about 'Having an anaesthetic'
- [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)  
On-line health encyclopaedia

### **Patient Services Department**

It is important that you speak to the department you have been referred to (see the contacts section) if you have any questions (for example, about medication) before your investigation or procedure.

If you have any concerns about your treatment, you can contact the Patient Services Department on 0300 123 1733. The Patient Services staff will be happy to discuss your concerns and give any help or advice.

If you have a complaint and you want it to be investigated, you should write direct to the Chief Executive at Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, Charles Hastings Way, Worcester WR5 1DD or contact the Patient Services Department for advice.

**Please contact Patient Services on 0300 123 1733 if you would like this leaflet in another language or format (such as Braille or easy read).**

### **Bengali**

“আপনি যদি এই লিফলেটটি বিকল্প কোনো ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে (যেমন ব্রেইল বা সহজ পাঠ) চান, তাহলে এই নম্বরে 0300 123 1733 প্যাশেন্ট সার্ভিসের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।”

### **Urdu**

“اگر آپ کو یہ دستی اشتہار کسی متبادل زبان یا ساخت میں چاہیے (جیسے کہ بریل / ایزی ریڈ) تو پبلیشنگ سروسز سے 0300 123 1733 پر رابطہ کریں۔”

### **Portuguese**

“Por favor, contacte os Serviços de Apoio ao Paciente através do número 0300 123 1733, caso precise deste folheto numa língua alternativa ou formato (como Braille / fácil de ler).”

### **Polish**

“Jeżeli pragniecie Państwo otrzymać tę broszurę w innym języku lub formacie (Braille / duży druk) proszę skontaktować się z Obsługą Pacjentów pod numerem 0300 123 1733.”

### **Chinese**

“如果您需要此份傳單的其他語言選擇或其他版本 (如盲人點字版/易讀版容易的閱讀),請致電 0300 123 1733與病患服務處聯繫。”

### **Comments**

We would value your opinion on this leaflet, based on your experience of having this procedure done. Please put any comments in the box below and return them to the Clinical Governance Department, Finance Department, Worcestershire Royal Hospital, Charles Hastings Way, Worcester, WR5 1DD.

Name of leaflet: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

Thank you for your help.