

EYE EXERCISES- AN EYESIGHT REJUVENATION THERAPY**Dr. Shilpa Anup Dhote***

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ABSTRACT

Eyes are one of the most important organ in the human body & vision is one of the most wonderful gift. But often many people neglect the importance of the eye care & do not pay proper attention towards keeping eyes healthy & rejuvenate them. Dentist always tells to brush the teeth to keep them healthy, but eye doctor never tells how to keep eyes healthy. In present era, there are lots of causes which can disturb the natural health of eyes like continuous work on computer, watching television for long time, very frequent & prolong use of mobile phones, night arousal, pollution, reading in poor source of light, unhealthy diet habits etc. To keep our eyes healthy & rejuvenate eyesight practicing EYE EXERCISES is effective therapy. The origin of natural vision correction by eye exercises dates back more than 90

years to William H. Bates, MD. He was an Ophthalmologist who wrote "Perfect Sight without Glasses". But unfortunately there is no evidence that Eye Exercises improve the vision. In India, it has been started in Arbindoashrama in Pudduchery & then after it has been spread to all over the country. Eye Exercises works on the principles of elimination of toxic materials from eyes, stimulation of eyes & its muscles, relaxation of eyes & mind. It helps to tone up extra-ocular muscles, trend the mind to see the objects & improve central fixation. There are so many Eye Exercises like Sunning, Swinging, Eye wash, Palming, Distance chart reading, candle light exercise, steaming, Candle flame, Ball exercise, Cold pad etc. which can be practice regularly to keep eyes & vision healthy. The aim of this article publication is to aware the scientific community about the benefits of Eye Exercises & to encourage the research scholars about the need of study on this particular topic.

KEYWORDS: *eye exercises **eye care ***eyesight rejuvenation.

INTRODUCTION

The eye is not only the most beautiful but also the most important sensory organ of human body. Four fifths of all the impressions on the senses come from the eyes. Moreover, the eyes make an essential contribution to the facial expression & serve for getting contact with the other people. Therefore they are an indispensable means of communication. A lot depends on intact strength of vision.^[1] In present era, there are lots of causes which can disturb the natural health of eyes like continuous work on computer, watching television for long time, very frequent & prolong use of mobile phones, night arousal, pollution, reading in poor source of light, unhealthy diet habits etc. To keep our eyes healthy & rejuvenate eyesight practicing EYE EXERCISES is effective therapy.

The origin of natural vision correction by eye exercises dates back more than 90 years to William Horatio Bates.^[2] He was an Ophthalmologist who formulated a theory about vision health & published the book “Perfect Sight without Glasses” in 1920 & the magazine “Better Eyesight” from 1919 to 1930. Parts of Bates’ approach to correcting vision disorders were based on psychological principles, which were contrary to many of the medical theories of the time & remain so. The Bates method still enjoys some limited acceptance as a modality of Alternative Medicines. Bates treated many patients, who claimed to have been cured of vision defects, especially Myopia.^[3] But unfortunately there is no evidence that Eye Exercises improve the vision.

In India, Eye Exercises has been started in The School for Perfect Eyesight in Sri Arbindo Ashram, Pudducherry (Pondicherry), decades ago, on May 5: 1968, at the efforts of an Ophthalmologist, Late Dr. Raghubir Sharan Agrawal, a staunch disciple of the renowned spiritual leader Sri Arbindo.^[4] There are so many Eye Exercises like Sunning, Swinging, Eye wash, Palming, Distance chart reading, Candle light concentration, Candle light –fine print reading, Ball exercise, Vapour or Steaming, Cold pad etc. which can be practice regularly to keep eyes & vision healthy.

EYE EXERCISES

Eye Exercises works on the principles of elimination of toxic materials from eyes, stimulation of eyes & its muscles, relaxation of eyes & mind.^[5] Before starting eye exercises, it is always recommended to splash the eyes with cold water a few times and head & spine position should be straight throughout the exercises.^[6]

SUNNING EXERCISE^[5]

It is best when practiced during sun rise or sunset - Application of eye care drops like rose water mixed with honey, plain rose water, I-tone eye drops, Gomutra arka (purified cow's urine) etc. - Make the person to sit facing towards Sun with feet flat on the floor, back erect, hands on knees, chin raised & eyes closed - Oscillation of body from one side to another side for 50 times (counts) - (The above procedure can be conducted by using a 200 watt bulb in cloudy days).

Action on Eyes: Sunning is relaxant of mind and Body, Looses the tightened muscles by increasing blood circulation, Stimulates the retina, as light is food for the retina & other nerve tissues.

SWINGING EXERCISE^[5]

Make the person to stand in front of the swinging bar (appearing like a railway fencing which measures 14''by 14'', the plates are ½''apart & painted with black colour) - Concentrate on distant object through the gap - Oscillate the body from one side to another side for 50 times with both eyes, blink at the end of bar every time - Repeat the same procedure closing one eye for twenty five time and then for other eye.

Action on Eyes: Swinging breaks the staring habits, puts the body & mind in rhythms, helps to exercise Intra-ocular muscle (iris) & in correction of accommodative defects.

EYE WASH^[5]

Take 2 eye cups – Fill up with lukewarm Triphala Kashaya – Put it against the eyes – Gently deep the eyes downwards in the eye cups and blink for 20 times - Repeat the procedure for 3 sets and then wash the eyes with plain or lukewarm water - (Triphala Kashaya can be prepared by mixing 150ml of boiling water with approx. 1-2gms of Triphala powder. Filter the mixture when it becomes lukewarm)

Action on Eyes: Lubrication, Cleansing, Chakshushya (effective for eyes) Antiseptic, Anti-Inflammatory Property.

PALMING EXERCISE^[5]

Sit in dark room comfortably - Rub the palm till it becomes little warm - Place it on closed eye, keeping the palms crossed with taking support on the forehead & elbows resting on a

soft pillow - Sit in the same position for five minutes and repeat the same for 5 times - Take deep breath, paying more attention to expiration - During palming think about some pleasant things like a beautiful rose, clear blue sky, listen to pleasant music or chant the word "OM".

Action on Eyes: Relaxes mind and body, Improves blood circulation, Relives strain.

DISTANCE CHART READING OR HART CHART – FOCUSING EXERCISE^{[5][7]}

Cut out the 1st small hand held chart - Post the large letters on the wall about 10 feet away - With hand held chart at typical reading length (typically 16 inches), read the first line of small letters aloud - Now focus on the wall & read the first row of letters again - Focus back on to the small letters in hand chart & read the second row - Keep switching back & forth, one row at a time - Do the full exercise one eye opened & other eye covered by one hand or a patch - Then switch to the other eye. Switch back to first the eye again, but this time move the hand chart one inch closer to eye for every row of letters that one can read on the small chart - Repeat same with other eye - Then do it at a reading distance of 16 inches with both eyes opened. (Here Snellen's vision chart also can be used)

Action on eyes: Improves perception of sight & helps in focusing the objects.

CANDLE LIGHT CONCENTRATION^[5]

Make patient to sit in a dark room 20 inches away from the candle - Keep the sight towards the middle zone/flame - To and fro movement towards the candle with the rhythm of respiration for 50 times with both eyes - Repeat same procedure with closing one eye & count 25 times for each eye - Blink the eye when you go nearer and away from candle.

Action on Eyes: Stimulates the retinal cells, Gives exercise to the pupil by rhythmically dilatation & constriction.

CANDLE LIGHT- FINE PRINT READING^[5]

The book or chart (printed in different size letters) is held at a distance of 20 inches - Try to read or at least to start recognizing the letter from any lines, which is seen best - Concentrate on that letters - Blink at the end of the line.

Action on Eyes: Increases the perception of the sight, Relives eye strain and Headache

CLOCK EXERCISE^[5]

Stand in front of a large clock - Look at the middle of the clock & then any hour mark, without turning head - Look back at the centre & then again at another hour mark - Repeat this at least 12 times - This exercise also can be done with eyes closed.

Action on Eyes: Brings the coordination between both the eyes.

BALL EXERCISE^{[5][6]}

Hold the ball in one hand toss it on the ground and collect/catch at eye level with other hand. ('V' shaped) - Extend the arm at eye level and throw the ball from one hand to another making an half circle - Head should be kept steady only eyes should follow the ball - Blink every time after catching. Do it for 50 times.

Action on Eyes: Correct the imbalance between extra-ocular muscles, Brings both eyes into co-ordinates movements.

VAPOUR PROCEDURE OR STEAMING EXERCISE^[5]

Sit in front of boiling water pan/ steamer covering a towel over the head and add 2-3 drops of Eucalyptus oil to it - Take vapor to the face, breath deeply from nose & blink frequently – Do it for 1-2 minutes.

Action on Eyes: Relieve the spasm of the muscle, Improves blood circulation, Decongestion.

COLD PAD EXERCISE^[5]

Sit in a relax position - Place cotton pad dipped in the water on both the eyes - Sit in the same position for 3-5 minutes.

Action on Eyes: Soothing, Reduces burning sensation, Relaxation.

After completing all the above exercises, lie in Shavasan (corpse pose) for a few minutes & relax yourself completely^[6]



Sunning



Swinging



Eye Wash



Palming



Candle Light Concentration



Candle Light-Fine Print Reading

**Clock Exercise****Ball Exercise****Vapour or Steaming****Cold Pad**

CHINESE EYE EXERCISES^[8]

Warming Up Session

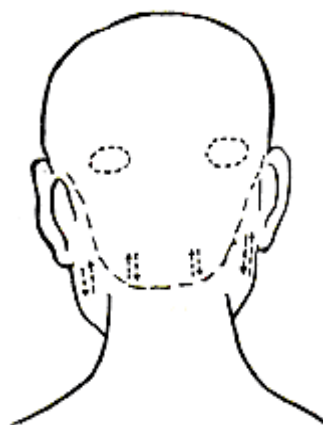
With the head facing forward

1. Move the eyes from left to right- Repeat 10 times
2. Move the eyes from top to bottom-Repeat 10 times
3. Move the eyes diagonally from bottom left to top right- Repeat 10 times
4. Move the eyes diagonally from top left to bottom right- Repeat 10 times
5. Move the eyes around clockwise- Repeat 10 times
6. Move the eyes around counter-clockwise- Repeat 10 times
7. Rub the eyelids to improve circulation
8. Perform Palming to rest the eyes

(Old persons or those who have tendency to become giddy or faint, can do eye exercises in lying down position)

CHINESE EYE EXERCISES- Part 1

1. With eyes closed- using the middle fingers, massage the bone of the eye socket. Move the fingers outwards & upwards, then down to the bridge of the nose as indicated by the arrows in figure 1. Repeat 8 times.

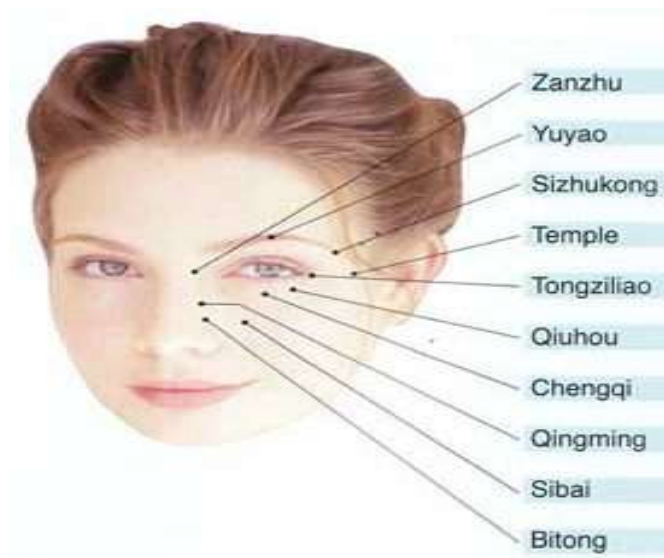
**Figure 1****Figure 2**

2. Using the middle fingers, massage the hollows in the “temples” on either side of the face in an up & down movement. Repeat 8 times (see figure 1)
3. Use the thumbs to massage the bones behind the ear lobes in an up & down movement. Repeat 8 times. (see figure 2)
4. Use the thumbs to massage the bones behind the head on either side of top of the neck, in an up & down movement. Repeat 8 times. (see figure 2)
5. Perform Palming to rest the eyes

CHINESE EYE EXERCISES - Part 2

This set of eye exercises is excellent for the students during intensive study period

1. With the fingers, gently massage the areas in the back of the skull directly behind the eyes. This may be very tender. (see figure 2)
2. Rotate the big toes clockwise & counter- clockwise, then massage them thoroughly, on the front, back & top, to improve blood supply to the brain & optic nerves and to relax the neck muscles.
3. Massage the eye reflex areas on the soles directly below the second & third toes on both feet
4. Massage the eye reflex areas directly below the nails of the big toes



CHINESE EYE EXERCISES - Part 3

Step 1: Massaging of “Yuyao” points

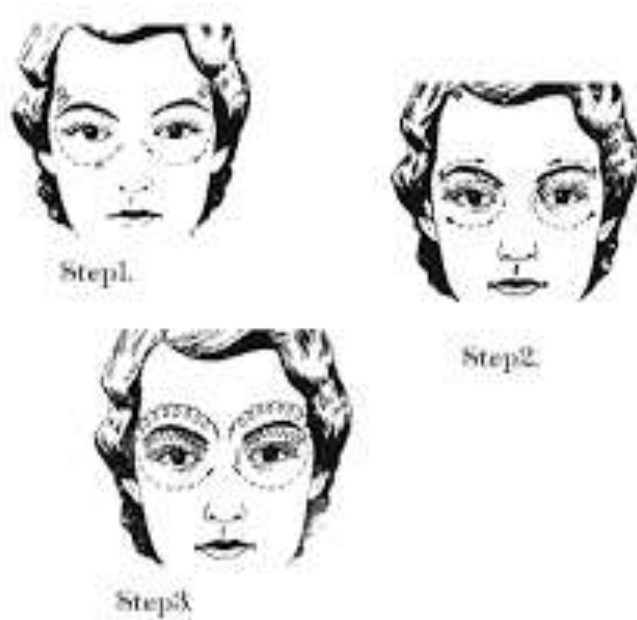
Identify 2 “Yuyao” points located at the medial (inner) aspect of the eyebrows – Press the thumbs against the 2 points in a circular movement to a count of 8 beats per cycle. Repeat the 8 circles.

Step 2: Massaging of “Zanzhu” points

Identify the “Zanzhu” points which are located on both the sides of nasal bridge –Using either right or left hand, place the thumb & index finger on the points. Press downwards & Massage upwards to a count of 8 beats per cycle. Repeat for 8 cycles.

Step 3: Massaging of “Shibai” points

Identify the “Shibai” points on the cheeks by dropping a vertical line from the pupils of eyes & a horizontal line from the nares (sides) of nose. The cross point of these two lines is where the “Shibai” point is – Press index fingers on the “ Shibai ” point and support the thumbs on the angles of jaws with the same remaining middle, ring & little fingers on both the sides of chin. Massage the points in a circular movement to a count of 8 beats per cycle. Repeat for 8 cycles.



Step 4: Pressing on “Temple” points & sliding round the eye sockets”

Identify the “Taiyang” points which are located at the most hollow areas of “Temples” – Press on the “Taiyang” points with the thumbs & flex the remaining fingers into a fist position – Use the knuckles of the index fingers to slide over from medial to lateral aspect of the upper eye sockets for the first 4 beats and continue to do similarly over the lower eye sockets for the second 4 beats of each cycle. Repeat for 8 cycles.

Once the 4 stage regime of Chinese eye exercises have completed, look at a distance for a short while to ensure a total relaxation of eye muscles.

BENEFITS OF EYE EXERCISES

1. It helps to tone up extra-ocular muscles, trend the mind to see the objects & improve central fixation ^[5]
2. Eye exercises meant to maintain ones best eyesight level during the day & to prevent significant further vision deterioration ^[5]
3. Strengthening the muscles of eyes with series of eye exercises helps to prevent eye strain ^[11]
4. During eye exercises, movement of eye muscles also take part to create up-and-down, side-to-side or circular motion & the muscle controlling back-and-forth movement of eyes natural lens. It helps to achieve sight at multiple distances ^[9]

5. Many eye disorders are related to the malfunctioning of the ocular muscles caused by chronic pathological, mental & emotional tensions. These technique help to alleviate various disorders related to defects in the eye muscles such as Myopia, Hypermetropia etc. ^[6]
6. Eye Exercises are useful for some problems, such as treating convergence insufficiency in which eyes have trouble working together ^[10]

PRECAUTIONS to be followed while doing Eye Exercises

1. Contact lenses should be removed during eye exercises ^[12]
2. Washing hands is necessary to avoid getting irritants in the eyes ^[12]
3. Exercises should be done first with one eye & then with both the eyes ^[5]
4. Do not strain or apply pressure over the eyes while doing exercises ^[5]
5. All movements of eyes should be slow & rhythmic ^[5]
6. Breathe gently & normally & do not resist any thoughts or sensations during the exercises ^[6]
7. Avoid unnecessary talk & laughing during exercises ^[5]
8. Avoid watching television, playing video games, cell phone games, using computer, laptop, tablets etc. excessively during the training period ^[3]
9. Exercise with full concentration will give more benefits ^[5]
10. It is necessary to do exercises regularly to get benefits for a longer period ^[5]
11. If any strain felt during or after any exercise, palming can be done ^[5]
12. If anybody is suffering from any systemic diseases like Hypertension, Diabetes etc., inform to the doctor about it first before starting the course ^[5]
13. It is necessary to take proper training for certain period under the guidance of Experts before starting eye exercises ^[5]
14. Consult the doctor if any problem arises during exercise ^[5]

Recommendations for keeping healthy eyes & eyesight^[9]

1. Taking shorts breaks from staring at a computer monitor to stare out to the distance of at least 20 feet (approx. 6m) for 20sec. also relieve some strain.
2. Focus on far things regularly.
3. Roll the eyes so that nutrition can spread evenly to make the eyes have better sight.
4. Blinking will also help to prevent tired eyes.
5. Wash eyes with clean & normal temperature water at least 3-4 times in a day.

6. It is more important to do exercises regularly than to do them for a long time, even 30-60 seconds of eye movement every hour is very helpful.
7. Never squish the eyes too hard. It increases the stress on eyes.
8. Simply try not to rub the eyes
9. Palming is a good method to use whenever eyes feel strained.
10. Follow habit of taking balanced diet & healthy food.

CONCLUSION

Practicing Eye Exercises regularly is very much beneficial to keep eyesight healthy rather it acts as an eyesight rejuvenation therapy. According to William H. Bates, it helps to cure eye disorders associated with vision defect especially, Myopia (& other refractive errors), but unfortunately there is no evidence available which proves that Eye Exercises improves vision. There is really need of study related to this particular topic.

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