Thousands of young people put vision at risk by straining their eyes and forgetting to visit the opticians. Eyesight is our most valued sense, beating smell, touch, taste and hearing in a recent poll. Staring at a computer screen all day can hurt your eyes and on a daily basis, an increasing number of us flit from work computer screens, to mobiles, to TVs to tablets and back again, so it’s no surprise eye strain is on the up.
“If you have a real problem, such as unexplained blurred vision or pain, discharge or redness in the eyes, it’s really important you go and see your eye doctor,” says Steve Schallhorn, Chairman of Optical Express’ International Medical Advisory Board (IMAB), which carried out the survey.

If your eyes are just tired from staring at screens and you’re experiencing tired eyes from day to day tasks, here are Steve’s top five tips for beating eye strain:

1. Take five.
Give yourself a few minutes, get comfortable, close your eyes, take off your glasses if you wear them, slow down, relax and take deep breaths. Just for a few minutes to really give your eyes a break.

2. When you get home, avoid near work for a period of time.
You’ve been working on a screen all day so don’t jump right into checking your email, or looking at your phone or even read for about an hour.

3. Change your lighting.
You want a gentle, soft light that’s not too bright or high intensity, but still illuminates properly. Try dimming a light, or turning on lamp rather than the main light.
See how your eyes feel – you don’t want to put them under strain from too little or too much light.

4. Blink.
We blink less when we’re doing intense work and some of the eye fatigue can be due to dry eye that we might not even notice. Taking five can help but also blink, get in tune with your eyes and see how they’re feeling. If they’re dry, close them or if that’s not enough use eye drops.

5. Massage.
When we work in front of a computer screen our forehead muscles get very tense and just a few minutes to massage the head, brow and neck, if you have someone to do it for you, can help ease the pressure.
And even if you don’t need glasses yet (by 65, 94 per cent of us will!), there are things you should do to prevent your eyes being over worked. These include lining your screen up comfortably, so your eyes are level with the top third of it, with you looking down slightly.

Also, adjust the brightness of your screen. It should be bright enough to read the letters comfortably but not significantly brighter than the surroundings, as a contrast will mean your retina has to work too hard to compensate.

It’s recommended you have your eyes checked every three years, even if you have no problems as some conditions, such as glaucoma, which can lead to blindness, have no symptoms.
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