

VisionNews

Vision Education Centre

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Dear friends,

I wish you all the best for the holiday season!

Enclosed is the Class Schedule for the winter term. There is a new series of Level One Saturday afternoon classes starting toward the end of January.

In January I am also offering a Level Two Workshop - Seeing and Being Seen. If either of these appeals to you, please mark your calendar and register soon, as space is limited.

For those of you in the Toronto area, I enclose the latest Introductory Class flyer and, as usual, ask that you post it or pass it on. Thank you.

I hope to see you soon for classes or private lessons. In the meantime, happy seeing!

Elizabeth Abraham

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‘One reason that you were probably never taught what you needed to know to be healthy at the computer was that most people have been too busy blaming the computer instead of training the operator....

Also, while many people understand the importance of exercise and training to keep the body in shape, many people are equally unaware that exercise and training techniques *also exist for the eyes* – to reduce and eliminate current vision problems and prevent future ones.

There is a direct relationship between your body, your vision and your performance. Stress on the body creates stress on the visual system which creates stress on the body, which in turn creates stress on performance...

But it is possible to work at a computer with considerably less effort and less fatigue.

How? By learning how to correctly use your eyes, your body and your mind at the computer.’

From *Total Health at the Computer*

by Martin Sussman and Dr Ernest Loenstein.

This book can be ordered by clicking on the title on the Books and Resources page of our website:

www.visioneducators.com.

MY VISION AT THE COMPUTER

I seem to be sitting in front of my computer more and more of the time. First I just used it for some of my correspondence, to write the newsletters, and to create handouts for workshops. Next came email. Then, my website. All of a sudden it is necessary for me to spend hours at the computer on most days.

In my classes and private practice I give advice to people every day about good vision habits at the computer. I know what to do to minimize stress in my eyes and the rest of my body. Do I do it myself? I must admit that I need to constantly remind myself to be aware. The draw of the computer is very compelling! Here are a few things I find helpful.

I have found it very important to sit erect so that I can breathe properly. When I am slumped or sitting in an uncomfortable position, I get tired much more quickly and my neck hurts.

I have also learned to have my monitor at a distance that allows me to see clearly without strain. My son bought me a flat LCD screen last year and my eyes feel much more comfortable since I got it. I recommend the investment!

A few years ago I decided to have my computer at home rather than in the office. When I moved into my new apartment the best place for the computer seemed to be in an alcove that had built-in shelves on the wall. I was pleased that I would have somewhere to keep all my paperwork. I found, however, that I got ‘stuck’ and hardly ever remembered to take breaks. There was also glare on the screen, which strained my eyes.

Within a few months I decided to move the computer into the living room where there are lots of windows, but less glare. The view is great, and I find myself taking breaks much more often. I work on the computer for a while, and then I make a few phone calls from a place where I can look out of the window while I talk. That way, when I get back to the computer I feel refreshed.

Recently, I put a mirror on the wall on one side of the screen. I can glance at it and frequently have a view out of the window behind me. This allows me to shift my focus often from near to far without interrupting my work, and also allows me to keep my

awareness of the periphery. It is a habit to focus so intently on the screen that I forget that there is a room all around me. When I keep my periphery open something in me relaxes immediately and I am more aware of my whole body and any tension I might be introducing.

I am a person who needs movement in order to be happy and healthy. I do not have a car, so I walk a lot. It is half an hour to my office and half an hour home. I walk to the shops and to do errands whenever I can. With this intrinsic need to move, I hardly need mention that I find sitting for long periods very unnatural and tiring. I use an exercise ball to sit on instead of a chair because it allows me to do tiny movements while I am typing, and this helps. I also take regular breaks to stretch and to dance. Those who have known me for some time, know that I have a passion for dancing. As soon as I feel I've been sitting long enough, I put on my favourite music and dance. What joy! A smile comes onto my face, I feel happy, I look out of the window as I dance and notice the illusion that everything outside is moving as I move, and I have a great time. I can see that this would not be possible if one is working in an office with other people, but perhaps it would be possible to close one's eyes and imagine doing something physical that one enjoys.

I find that I need to drink a lot of water when I'm working at the computer. I love green tea, and often used to drink it while I was working. I found, however, that my eyes were feeling very dry in spite of the amount of liquid I was drinking. Green tea, although it has many health benefits, also contains caffeine. I wondered whether that was causing my dry eyes. And indeed, when I switched to drinking water with a little lemon in it, my eyes felt much better. Caffeine and sugar are dehydrating and also act as vasoconstrictors. I had hoped that the caffeine in green tea would not affect me in this way but alas, that is the case. Since computers themselves are dehydrating, water seems to suit me best while I am working.

When I take a break to go to the washroom I alternately splash hot and cold water on my face, and take the time to do some facial massage and palming. What a difference all this makes!

And, last but not least, there is **Stress Away**. It is a program developed by one of my colleagues, and is available through www.visioneducators.org. You can program it to come on every 15 minutes or so, and it interrupts you with an exercise you can do while at the computer.

Good luck with developing new and healthier vision habits while you work! Please keep in touch and let me know of things you have discovered on your own.

ARGENTINE TANGO LESSONS

Many of you have asked where you can take tango lessons. I highly recommend my teacher, Leeliana! She starts new beginner classes regularly, and also has ongoing intermediate and advanced level classes.

Leeliana uses a mind-body approach, and works with all the aspects that we discuss in our classes: the necessity of being grounded, centred, relaxed and aware as we learn new skills. Tango lessons taught in this way directly connect to our explorations in clearer vision, communication with others, and our inherent creativity and, it's fun! Interested? Contact Leeliana at leeliana@gmail.com. Her website is <http://tangobyleeliana.com>.

VISION IMPROVEMENT IN NATURE

Every season brings new opportunities to see the world differently. I am reminded of the quote by Marcel Proust: **'The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new horizons, but in having new eyes.'**

During classes this fall, I brought in leaves of different colours, stones, and chestnuts. We spent time touching them with closed eyes, looking at them from both near and far, examining the details in a way we usually don't take the time to do.

Now that the leaves are gone from the trees, we have the opportunity to trace the branches as they are outlined against the sky, count the clumps that turn out to be birds' nests, appreciate the shapes of things half-hidden by newly-fallen snow.....

THE NATURAL VISION IMPROVEMENT KIT

Meir Schneider has a new vision improvement kit containing 2 Audio CDs - one session for use at the computer and the other for improving distance vision - a 90 page Illustrated Guidebook, 13 Photo-Illustrated Practice Cards and 2 Eye Charts.

Meir Schneider, PhD, LMT, is founder and principal instructor of the School for Self-Healing in San Francisco California. He is author of *Movement for Self-Healing: An Essential Resource for Anyone Seeking Wellness* and *Self-Healing: My Life and Vision*; and co-author of the *Handbook of Self-Healing: Your Personal Program for Better Health and Increased Vitality*. Meir was my first vision teacher. He was born blind, and taught himself to see well enough to read and drive, using the Bates Method.

This new interactive kit is very helpful as a guide for your personal vision practice at home. I have a few copies for sale at \$35.00CAD. You can also order it from: www.visioneducators.com by clicking on any title on the Books and Resources page to connect you to Amazon.com.