**Ophthalmologists Say 90 Percent of Work-Related Eye Injuries Can be Avoided by Wearing Eye Protection**

On-the-job safety goes well beyond avoiding slips, falls, and heavy lifting. Caring for your eyes should be a high priority and part of an overall workplace wellness routine. This is important because each day, about 2,000 U.S. workers sustain a job-related eye injury that requires medical treatment[[1]](#footnote-1). However, 90 percent of these accidents can be avoided by wearing eye protection[[2]](#footnote-2). As part of an ongoing effort to stress the importance of workplace eye wellness, the [INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] and the [American Academy of Ophthalmology](file:///C:\Users\bshelton\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\ADZN015M\aao.org), during the month of March, is encouraging the public to do right by their eyes and wear appropriate eye protection.

Workplace eye injuries cost more than $300 million a year in lost productivity, treatment, and compensation[[3]](#footnote-3). These injuries range from simple eye strain to trauma, which may lead to permanent damage, vision loss, and blindness. This is particularly true for workers in construction, manufacturing, and mining. Approximately, 40 percent of eye injuries in the workplace happen in these three industries[[4]](#footnote-4).

If an eye injury does occur, an individual should seek care from an ophthalmologist — a physician who specializes in the medical and surgical treatment of eye diseases and conditions — or go to an emergency room for immediate care.

Caring for your eyes on the job should not be limited to those who do physical labor, however. People who spend long hours working on a computer can experience eye discomfort. Focusing on small font type for hours on end can cause eye strain, fatigue, and headaches. Staring at screens for long periods can also leave eyes parched and red, causing eyes to become dry from lack of blinking. This happens frequently as computer screens or other digital displays reduce a person’s blink rate by as much as 50 percent[[5]](#footnote-5).

The Academy provides tips to help avoid workplace eye injury or strain:

* **Wear protective eyewear**: Ensure that your [eye protection is appropriate](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/injuries-protective-eyewear) for the type of hazard that may be present in your workplace, such flying debris, falling objects, chemicals, intense light, and heat. Your eyewear must be [American National Standards Institute ANSI](https://www.ansi.org)-approved and OSHA compliant. You must use special-purpose safety glasses, goggles, face shield or helmet if you are near hazardous radiation welding, chemicals, lasers or fiber optics.
* **Position your computer 25 inches away**: **If you are working** on a desktop computer, try placing the monitor at an arm’s length away from your face. You may need to adjust the font size to appear larger at that distance.
* **Follow the 20-20-20 rule**: Eye strain and dry eye occur after long, continuous periods of viewing digital screens up close. To help alleviate this, take a break every 20 minutes by looking at an object 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Looking at a distance allows your eyes to relax and return to a regular rate of blinking again. Normally, people blink about 14 times a minute[[6]](#footnote-6) and with every blink, your eyes are lubricated with fluid that contains moisturizing elements, including oil.
* **Reduce glare on your smartphone and digital screen**:While many new phones and digital devices have glass screens with excellent picture quality, they also produce a strong glare that can aggravate the eyes. If you use a glass screen device, adjust the low light filter setting to lower screen brightness or use a matte filter to reduce eye strain.
* **Adjust environmental lighting at your work**: If your computer screen is brighter than your office surroundings, your eyes need to work harder to see. You can reduce eye strain by adjusting the lighting in your surroundings.

"It takes only a few seconds to protect yourself from eye related issues that can cause vision problems," said Brenda Pagán-Durán, M.D., a clinical spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology. “I can’t stress enough the importance of incorporating eye wellness into your daily routine; whether it’s simply adjusting the setting on your computer monitor, or wearing appropriate protection to avoid serious eye injury. This is truly an ounce of prevention that can safeguard your vision.”

[INSERT YOUR SPOKESPERSON’S QUOTE HERE]

For more eye safety tips, visit [eye injury prevention at work](ttps://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/injuries-work). For information on computers and eye strain in the workplace, visit [www.eyesmart.org](http://www.eyesmart.org).

1. <https://nei.nih.gov/sites/default/files/health-pdfs/HVMPreventingInjuries_Tagged.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.ishn.com/articles/103615-of-workplace-eye-injuries-could-be-lessened-or-prevented-with-safety-eyewear-use> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/eyefaceprotection> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.ishn.com/articles/98066-workplace-eye-injuries-by-the-numbers> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21275516> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17099391> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)