

Behavioural Optometry

What is Optometric Vision Therapy or Behavioural Optometry?

Optometric vision therapy or behavioural optometry is an individualized treatment program designed to improve visual function and performance. It is an approved treatment modality for disorders including, but not limited to:

- Ocular motility dysfunction/eye movement disorders
- Vergence dysfunction/inefficiency in using both eyes together
- Strabismus/misalignment of the eyes
- Amblyopia/lazy eye
- Accommodative disorders/focusing problems
- Visual information processing disorders
- Visual sensory and motor integration
- Visual rehabilitation after traumatic brain injury or stroke all of which result in inefficient visual information processing.

Most people who visit an optometrist know that any eye health problems will be detected and managed and that glasses or contact lenses will be prescribed if indicated. That picture may be incomplete because there are visual conditions that could be managed by optometric vision therapy or behavioural optometry. This therapy enables an individual to learn more efficient ways to perform visually. It is an art and science of vision care that complements the prescription of spectacles, contact lenses and the treatment of eye disease.

Optometric vision therapy, also referred to as visual training or orthoptics (CPT 92065), is an established, medically necessary therapy when prescribed by an optometrist. Optometric vision therapy can improve visual function much like physical therapy can improve general motor function. Clinical tests with associated normative values are administered by an optometrist to determine the presence of visual deficiencies. If optometric vision therapy is indicated, the optometrist recommends a specific treatment plan.

The Eyecare Trust is a registered charity that exists to promote awareness of all aspects of eye health. For more information call our public information line on 0845 129 5001 or log on to www.eyecaretrust.org.uk



Factsheet

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Optometric vision therapy typically involves a programmed combination of office treatment and home therapy. Lenses, prisms, optical devices, and specially adapted computers are some of the devices through which one learns to use vision more effectively. The specific materials are less important than the feedback provided to the patient to enable change. Visual skills need to be developed until they become automatic and are subconsciously integrates with the other skills. The extent of success is also linked to patient compliance.

The benefits of optometric vision therapy or behavioural optometry, which include improved visual information processing and the ability to sustain visual function over time, are as applicable to the child in the classroom as they are to the adult using a computer or reading a book. Without efficient visual skills the act of reading can be frustrating. Some of the common symptoms relieved through vision therapy include eye strain, visually induced headaches, inability to concentrate when doing visual tasks, and errors such as loss of place or reversals. More often, individuals have no recognized symptoms due to their avoidance of visually demanding tasks or an adaptation that decreases their performance. Optometric vision therapy or behavioural optometry also facilitates appropriate visual development, and serves as a component of the multi-disciplinary effort following stroke or head injury.

[Click here for list of British Association of Behavioural Optometrists](#)

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