

## news & notes

### EYE-OPENING STATS

Computer eyestrain is not a minor issue experienced by only a few people. As more and more professions in the twenty-first century go online, more and more employees spend hours a day in front of a computer screen.

Take a look at these eye-popping statistics:

- Approximately 3 out of 4 people who use computers for extended periods of time complain of eyestrain problems.
- It's estimated that about 10 million people get eye exams for computer-related eye- strain problems every year.
- More people every year are using computers both at home and at work for several hours a day.
- Computer eyestrain can also be exacerbated by the normal aging process of the eyes.



"Now cover your left eye and tell me if you can read this line."



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## Eye on technology

### *May is Healthy Vision Month*

As a managing editor at BLR®, David Galt knows first hand about working at a computer monitor all day. He offers these 10 tips to help employees avoid the eyestrain that comes with computer work.

1. **Look away from the monitor for 30 seconds**, every 15 or 20 minutes. Look at or scan things at least 20 feet away to allow the eyes to focus in a rest position.
2. **Reposition monitor distance 20" to 26" from your eyes** (roughly the distance from your eyes to the end of your index finger with arm outstretched). Otherwise, you'll be forced to sit or lean too close to the screen or sit too far away. If your eyeglass prescription does not allow clear vision at the 20" to 26" range, get it adjusted.
3. **Reset monitor height** so that the top edge is even with your view when looking straight ahead. Then tilt the screen upward so you are not looking at the image at an angle. The optimal screen position is 10 to 20 degrees below eye level.
4. **Reset the monitor screen resolution**, the Internet browser text size, and the zoom and font default in the operating system and in software applications so that text is easy to read. Start with a screen resolution of 600x800 for older CRT monitors and 1024x768 or higher for LCD (flat screen) monitors.
5. **Set the monitor refresh rate at or above 75 hertz (hz)** on older CRT models. Refresh rate is irrelevant for LCD monitors and is factory set, usually at 60 hz.
6. **Blink often** (put a sticky note on your monitor!). The average blink rate is 22 times per minute. The rate goes down to 7 per minute when looking at a monitor—this causes the eye lens to dry out. Use an eye moistener (saline solution) if you can't get into the habit of blinking more often.
7. **Relax eye muscles**. Put the palm of your hands over your eyes for a minute or so, once every half hour. This warms the muscles around the eyes, relaxing them.
8. **Minimize glare**. Make sure the background light level around the monitor is about the same as the screen light level. Minimize direct sunlight or bright lights in front of the monitor or directly behind it.
9. **Adjust the contrast and brightness** to levels you use when reading a book comfortably. A bright screen causes eyestrain.
10. **Use a paper holder** to hold documents. Put the document at the same level as the monitor, or attach it to the monitor. This prevents repetitive neck and eye movement from paper to screen.

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### LASER POINTER DANGERS

If those red and green laser pointers are commonly used in training and at meetings in your workplace, you might want to know the results of new research that suggests they may be hazardous for those who use them—and those who are in places where they are in use.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) tested 122 handheld laser pointers and found that nearly 90 percent of green pointers and about 44 percent of red ones were out of compliance with federal safety regulations.

Both emitted more visible power than allowed, and green pointers also gave off unacceptable levels of infrared light.

The NIST researchers concluded, "Our results raise numerous safety questions regarding laser pointers and their use."

They say that permanent eye damage could be a result, so discuss with your training manager if there are alternatives that can be used.



## 11 steps to less stress

### *Learn to relax*

Stress management expert Susie Mantell ([www.relaxintuit.com](http://www.relaxintuit.com)) gives these tips:

1. **Prioritize, streamline, delegate, and discard.** When facing a task, ask if it's really necessary to do today, if there's an easier way to do it, or who might be able to help.
2. **Break it up.** Take 2- to 3-minute breaks every hour.
3. **Make time** for creative expression, healthy eating, moderate daily exercise, time with friends, and time in nature.
4. **Be on time.** Running late creates stress in us as well as in others. Build in cushion time between appointments to allow for the unexpected.
5. **Send negativity flying.** If a coworker is on the warpath, visualize an airplane with an advertising banner over that person's head. Imagine each negative word floating up into the banner, flying out of view.
6. **Relax and watch what happens.** Do minimeditations or mindful breathing while you're shifting between tasks or in line at the cafeteria. Getting a massage, rocking a baby, rebuilding an engine, or playing an active sport can also produce a meditative state of relaxation.
7. **Get essential nutrients,** such as vitamins, daylight, and laughter.
8. **Consider what you consume,** including sugar, caffeine, and alcohol.
9. **Watch your words.** Never say anything to yourself that you wouldn't say to your best friend.
10. **Be kind.** Do something kind for a different coworker every day.
11. **Sleep on it.** Try to get restful, restorative sleep every day.

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## The story on SDSs

### *What you need to know*

Federal OSHA recently revised its hazard communication standard to align it with the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals, known as the "GHS," which was adopted by the United Nations in 2003. Under the GHS, detailed chemical hazard information must be provided in a standardized format called a safety data sheet, or SDS, which will have 16 sections. All required information will be in the same place on each SDS, making the information easier to find. Here are the sections:

- Section 1: Identification
- Section 2: Hazard Identification
- Section 3: Composition and Information on Ingredients
- Section 4: First-Aid Measures
- Section 5: Fire-Fighting Measures
- Section 6: Accidental Release Measures
- Section 7: Handling and Storage
- Section 8: Exposure Controls and Personal Protection
- Section 9: Physical and Chemical Properties
- Section 10: Stability and Reactivity
- Section 11: Toxicological Information
- Section 12: Ecological Information
- Section 13: Disposal Considerations
- Section 14: Transport Information
- Section 15: Regulatory Information
- Section 16: Other Information