



Visual Stress

Information for students,
parents, and teachers



Costs:

Coloured overlay assessment	£35
A4 Coloured overlay	£6
Colorimetry	£35
SV Cerium Precision tinted lenses	£188

Practitioners:

Alex Gaines BSc MCOptom

Appointments:

To make an appointment please call us on
01394 382718 or e-mail
orders@eyeppractice.co.uk

An assessment of your binocular vision and basic eye tracking is included in the overlay or colorimetry appointment, but not a thorough health check of the eyes. **If you have not had a sight test within the last 3 months, please let us know when you book the appointment.**

Remember:

If you already use an overlay or glasses, please bring them to the appointment.

If you had an eye examination recently, bring any information that you were given with you.

A full assessment is not usually possible for children younger than 6 years old

The eyeppractice visual stress test is not suitable for children under 6 years old.

The words used to check the rate of reading with and without the overlay are common, short words which should be familiar to children of age 7 and above, but younger children may struggle to read them.

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Visual stress



What is visual stress?

Visual stress is the discomfort some people feel when reading or looking at patterns. The symptoms can include headaches and light sensitivity. Visual stress can make words appear distorted and causes tiredness when reading. These symptoms may occur despite normal vision and can be reduced by coloured filters.

Visual stress is sometimes called Meares-Irlen syndrome or Scotopic Sensitivity syndrome.

What are the symptoms of visual stress?

- Print movement
Words appear to vibrate, move from side to side or up and down. Words appear to break or join up and letters seem muddled. Sometimes surrounding words appear to move or “fall off” the page.
- Print blurring
Closely spaced small black type on white paper causes most problems.
- Letters change size
- Extra letters appear
- Letters fade or become darker
- Sensitivity to lights

- Patterns appear
These can be either in the print or in the white spaces. They are sometimes described as “worms”, “rivers” or “waterfalls”
- Colour
Blocks of colour can appear on the page, distracting the reader or obscuring words. There can also be coloured highlights around letters or words.
- Tiredness or dizziness
- Discomfort or headache.

Please note:

Blurring, sore eyes, headaches and glare are also symptoms of other eye conditions. It is important to ensure you arrange a full sight test to rule out other possible causes.

What are the tell-tale signs?

People with visual stress may:

- Move close to or away from the page
- Frequently look away from the page
- Rub their eyes frequently
- Blink a lot or flutter their eyelids
- Lose their place and sometimes use their finger as a guide
- Skip words and lines

- Are reluctant to read and write and are often (but not always) poor readers.

These symptoms and signs can often be reduced by coloured filters. Different people need different colours and an experienced practitioner is the best person to find the correct filter.

About one person in five is thought to suffer from some visual stress. Visual stress is improved by using a coloured filter. In some patients the improvement is remarkable.

Is visual stress the same as dyslexia?

No. Both conditions cause difficulties with reading but people with dyslexia may not suffer from visual stress, and people with visual stress may not be dyslexic. However, some people can have both conditions. It is important that visual stress is detected because other learning difficulties will then be easier to cope with.