Uruguayan American School

Saldún de Rodríguez 2375, Carrasco. C.P. 11500
Montevideo, Uruguay | (598) 2600 7681
www.uas.edu.uy

UAS WELLNESS TEAM

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From our Nurse Elisa:

How can I avoid eye strain during this period of time studying and working from home?
I would like to share some information to diminish eye strain, dry eye, headaches and insomnia as a result of the number of hours we are exposed to screen devices.

Why does computer use strain the eyes more than reading printed material? Because we tend to blink less while using computers and focus the eyes on computer screens. The following simple tips can help our eyes a lot to relieve from screen exposure:

Keep your distance: The eyes actually have to work harder to see close up than far away. Try keeping the monitor or screen at arm's length, about 25 inches away. Position the screen so your eye gaze is slightly downward.
Reduce glare: Glass screens can produce glare that can aggravate the eye. If possible, use a matte screen filter.
Adjust lighting: If a screen is much brighter than the surrounding light, your eyes have to work harder to see. Adjust your room lighting and try increasing the contrast on your screen to reduce eye strain.
Give your eyes a break: Remember to blink and follow the 20-20-20 rule. Looking into the distance allows your eyes to relax. The 20-20-20 eyes safety rule
Keep eyes moist: You may use artificial tears to help lubricate your eyes when they feel dry. In winter, heaters on high can further dry your eyes.
Exposure to natural daylight: Kids need time playing outside for their eyes and avoid eye fatigue and nearsightedness.
Stop using devices before bed: There is evidence that blue light may affect the body's circadian rhythm, our natural wake and sleep cycle. During the day, blue light wakes us up and stimulates us. So, too much blue light exposure late at night from phones or other devices

may make it harder to get to sleep. Limit screen time before going to sleep. No screens in the bedroom when it is time for bed.

Body position: Poor sitting posture also increases eye discomfort.

Nutrients & Hydration: A balanced diet is very important for maintaining healthy eyes. Drink water during the day to avoid dehydration.

Hygiene measures: Infrequent handwashing or rubbing eyes also negatively contributes to eye health.

Environment: If the working or studying room includes improper lighting, uncomfortable seating, bad viewing angles and improper reading or working distances, this can also add to visual stress.

Try an eye massage: A good suggestion for any time your eyes feel tired but especially after staring at a book or screen for hours. After washing your hands, you can rub them together until the friction warms them, then gently press against your eyes to help relax the eye muscles.

The majority of the knowledge we have about the world around us comes through our eyes so eyestrain can be frustrating and very discomforting, but it is not a severe eye problem since resting the eyes by following these simple tips will help to minimize and really improve the eye ache. However, if these tips don't work well, and you experience consistently dry red eyes or eye pain, then there might be another eye muscle imbalance, incorrect vision or other cause that worsen the computer eyestrain. In this case, it is recommended to make an appointment with your eye health provider to determine the problem.

Sources: Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Mayo Clinic and the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

From our Elementary Counselor Marisa

I found an interesting article about how during stressful times we can make stress work positively for us. Here are some great suggestions that can be useful when you are stressed.

- Acknowledge it. By being able to recognize your stress level you will be able to make it conscious, passing it from the amygdala center of emotion and fear to the prefrontal cortex responsible for planning and controlling. We are actually using a lot of mental energy trying to avoid those stressful thoughts.
  Once you realize what specifically is stressing you out, then you can evaluate how it is manifesting in your behavior and body.
  Remember to think about what emotions you are experiencing: anger, frustration, anxiety? Do you notice its impact on your body: sleeping or eating changes? tightness in your neck and shoulders?
- Once you are able to recognize your stress and realize the symptoms, then you can own your stress. By owning our stress, you will be able to connect to your personal motivation and value behind your stress.

We appreciate your time in reading this communication   Page 2

- Use it in a productive way. Are the things you are stressed about realistic? Am I able to control them? There are many things happening that we can't control but using the energy on those that we can control in a productive way, and that is the best we can do. Some research says that true transformation and creative ideas come during times of stress and crisis. So let's take the best of it. This will pass and we will be able to ask ourselves: Did we live in accordance with our values? Did we make the most of this opportunity to learn and grow personally? What did I learn about myself and as a family?

For more information, you can always get in touch with me at mcao@uas.edu.uy. Stay safe and healthy!