

EYE STRAIN

IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The safe way to save
your vision

Is screen time affecting your eye health? The research is mixed: Some experts report that too much time spent on computers, tablets, and smartphones is detrimental to eyes of all ages, while other researchers argue that staring at screens won't affect eye health over the long-term. But if you find yourself suffering from irritated eyes or blurry vision, all those hours spent staring at bright, pixelated screens could be having a negative impact on your eyesight.

Computer vision syndrome (CVS) is a fancy name given to eye and vision-related problems that stem from digital screen time. Those suffering from CVS may experience blurred vision, dry eyes, neck or shoulder pain, and headaches. It's no wonder there's now a technical

umbrella term for these ailments. Current research estimates that 74 percent of Americans own a desktop or laptop computer and 81 percent own a smartphone. As a result, American adults are averaging 12 hours of screen time every day—and that's taking a toll on our vision.

While it's no surprise that increased screen time is a major contributor to eye strain, it's also not the only factor giving your peepers pause. Other activities, such as driving for long periods of time, reading, or performing tasks in a poorly lit environment (either too dim or too bright) can trigger your eyes to work overtime, as well. Luckily, time-tested Mother Nature has the right nutrients to help counteract the effects of modern eye strain.



Optimal Comfort with Omega-7

When it comes to healthy vision, omega-7 fatty acids can moisturize and soothe your eyes. Omega-7s can be found in foods like fish and nuts, but the best source of this rare fatty acid is the berry of the sea buckthorn plant. This berry is commonly called a “nutrient bomb” because it contains more than 200 bioactive compounds including vitamins, antioxidants, essential fatty acids, and plant sterols.



A study in Finland researched the effects of sea buckthorn oil on eye dryness in men and women between the ages of 20 and 75. The participants took morning and evening doses of either a placebo or a proprietary sea buckthorn extract called SBA24 for three months. At the end of the study, the participants taking the sea buckthorn reported significantly less redness and burning—symptoms

associated with eye dryness. This isn’t surprising since fatty acids have the ability to reduce inflammation and moisturize mucous membranes throughout the body.

Because most Americans don’t eat diets rich in omega-7s, it’s important to supplement. But be aware that the beneficial nutrients in sea buckthorn are found only in the pulp—not the oil—so you need a complete extract of the whole berry. Look for a supplement that contains a clinically studied sea buckthorn like SBA24, which is proven to relieve eye dryness and enhance overall health in the process. This specific sea buckthorn has also developed the reputation for being able to restore healthy hair, skin, and nails, inside and out. So take it to support healthy eyes, and you’ll reap extra beauty benefits in the process.

Powerful Protection with OPCs

To ensure proper functioning, your eyes require more antioxidants than any other organ in the body. This is

because the eyes are extremely delicate and damage to the lens and retina can happen all too easily. Eyes need the right antioxidants to support their fragile structure. Grape seed extract can greatly influence the strength and integrity of important blood vessels in your eyes. This is because it contains powerful anti-inflammatory compounds called oligomeric proanthocyanidins, commonly referred to as OPCs.

The journal *Molecular Vision* reported that the OPCs in grape seed protect epithelial cells in the lens of the human eye from free-radical damage. Another study found that grape seed extract protects the delicate nerve cells of the retina. But not all grape seed extract supplements are equally effective. For the most benefit, look for a tannin-free French grape seed extract called VX1. This clinically studied extract is standardized to contain only OPCs that are small enough to guarantee absorption in the body. VX1 will provide maximum benefits for your eyes and so much more. ■

GIVE YOUR EYES A BREAK

Screens are a major part of modern life, but there’s plenty you can do to counteract their negative effects. Start here:



- **TONE DOWN THE BRIGHTNESS.** Most electronics come equipped with brightness and contrast controls. Turn your TV and phone screens to the most natural settings available so that melatonin-blocking blue light isn’t overstimulating your brain and straining your eyes.



- **REMEMBER THE 20/20/20 RULE.** Take a 20 second break, every 20 minutes, where you focus on something at least 20 feet away. This gives your eyes a much needed rest, especially at the office where you may be working on a computer for hours at a time.



- **INCREASE YOUR EXPOSURE TO SUNLIGHT.** Give your eyes a digital detox by making a conscious effort to spend time in nature. Research shows that time spent outdoors can decrease stress levels and enhance mental health. Bonus points for focusing on anything green, which helps calm the nervous system.