

ErgoMattersSM

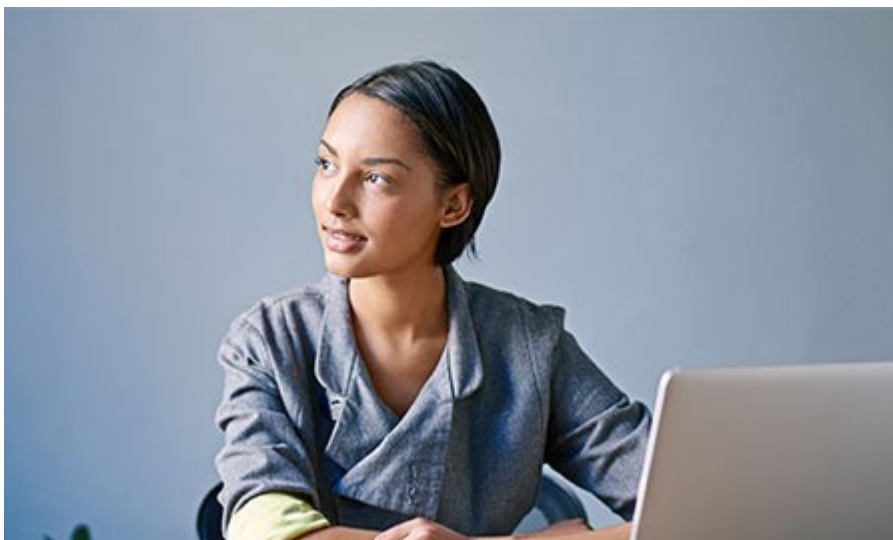


Most of us are familiar with the concept that overuse of a specific body part might result in an injury. Major league baseball pitchers experience this all the time - even little leaguers often suffer from elbow or shoulder damage from too much throwing.

Ergonomists recommend microbreaks—breaking up long stretches of repetitive work—as an effective strategy to prevent discomfort that may lead to a soft-tissue injury.

The 20 20 20 Rule: A break for your eyes

The 20 20 20 Rule is a safety microbreak concept developed by optometrist Dr. Jeffrey Anshel. It states: every 20 minutes, look at something at least 20 feet away, for 20 seconds to reduce fatigue and eye strain.



The 20 20 20 Rule: Every 20 seconds, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

The 20 20 20 Rule can help relieve symptoms caused by [eye strain](#), such as:

- Discomfort around the eyes.
- Headaches.
- Blurry or “double” vision.
- Dry eyes.
- Sore neck, shoulders, and back.

How to implement the 20 20 20 Rule

Whether you work in an office staring at a computer all day or work from a tablet in the field, your eyes need a

rest. Eye strain can affect anyone. So how do you remember to take your 20 second break every 20 minutes, and give your eyes needed relief? Here are some ideas to consider:

1. Set a reminder on your phone.
2. Have your coworkers take the break with you.
3. If your eyes feel sore, take your microbreak right away! Don't wait for the next planned microbreak.
4. If you are in charge of safety at your workplace, share this information at one of your safety meetings.

To help you share the 20 20 20 Rule at your workplace, we've developed a resource you can use during one of your safety meetings.

[Use our 20 20 20 Rule Safety Meeting Topic](#)

Other benefits of the 20 20 20 Rule

The part of the rule that asks you to look at something 20 feet away has other benefits, too! When you look away from your work, you probably stop working, too. This gives the rest of your body a chance to relax as well.

Give this a try and you might experience less fatigue and possibly have more energy at the end of the day-to toss the baseball around with your kids.

What causes eye strain?



Too much time viewing a digital screen makes the eyes work harder, which can lead to eye strain.

When it comes to computers or tablets, it's the images on the screen. According to the American Optometric Association (AOA), [viewing a digital screen puts more demand on the eyes than reading a book or a piece of paper](#). The eyes work harder because the images may not be as sharp or the contrast might be different when compared to a written page.

Considering how often we use computers and mobile devices both at work and away from work, there is definite risk for headaches, blurry vision, and the other symptoms of eye strain. In fact, according to the AOA, 58 percent of adults in the United States have experienced either digital eye strain or problems with their vision resulting directly from the use of computers and mobile devices.

Other ways to reduce discomfort due to eye strain

The ergonomics of your workstation is another thing to consider to help minimize eye strain. Lighting, monitor placement, keyboard and mouse placement, proper adjustment of your chair, and posture can reduce the risk of injury too. And, not just to your eyes, but to your whole body.

In our Office Ergonomics series, we've produced videos to help you optimize your overall workstation set up. Starting with your office chair, view these in the order below for the best results.

1. [Adjusting your Chair](#)
2. [Mouse and Keyboard](#)
3. [Monitor Placement](#)
4. [Lighting](#)
5. [Headsets](#)
6. [Stretches for Office Workers](#)

Our reliance on computers and digital devices is not going away. To avoid the fatigue and pain that comes with eye strain, we need to give our eyes a break. So remember: every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away, for 20 seconds.

Resource

[American Optometric Association 20 20 20 Rule Infographic](#)

The above evaluations and/or recommendations are for general guidance only and should not be relied upon for legal compliance purposes. They are based solely on the information provided to us and relate only to those conditions specifically discussed. We do not make any warranty, expressed or implied, that your workplace is safe or healthful or that it complies with all laws, regulations or standards.