

Visual Tracking

We need to master smooth control and coordinated movements of our eyes in order to attend to and follow objects and people in our environment. Controlled eye movements are also needed for finding and tracking a moving object, scanning the environment, sustaining eye contact on a fixed object or person, quickly shifting focus from one thing to another and for hand – eye coordination.

Implications of Poor Visual Tracking

- Difficulty controlling eyes to follow a moving object.
- Difficulty fixating eye contact to look at another person when communicating or fixating eye contact to look at a task for long enough to process its meaning.
- Difficulties with speed and accuracy when copying from written sheets or white boards.
- Difficulties using eyes to guide hands for fine motor and writing tasks.
- Difficulties with reading and checking work for accuracy.
- Eye muscles may fatigue when attention to specific tasks needs to be maintained over long periods of time (for example in examination situations) and this will further exacerbate implications of poor visual eye tracking.

Activities to improve Visual Tracking

The following exercises will help to strengthen the muscles of the eye and therefore improve visual tracking. Select activities of your choice and complete daily for ten to fifteen minutes:

- Encourage child to keep their head still whilst following an object with their eyes moved vertically, horizontally diagonally and in circular tracks.
- **Improve scanning within a small visual field**
 - Print stories on A4 worksheets and ask the child to highlight each time they see the word 'and'. Start by timing for one minute and gradually increase the length of time to improve stamina. Go through this with the child and check if they have missed any words out.
 - Use 'Where's Wally' books.
- **Improve tracking within a larger visual field**
 - Play swing ball encouraging the child to "keep your eye on the ball".
 - Play activities such as Tennis, Badminton and simple throw and catch games. Start with a larger ball and reduce the size of the ball to increase difficulty.
 - Play 'Eye Spy'; choose objects in the extremities of the child's visual field.
- **Flashlight Games**
 - Shine your flashlight on the ceiling and move the light in a slow path. Ask the child to follow the light with their eyes, keeping their head very still.
 - You and the child both have a flashlight; you shine and the child has to catch your beam.
 - Have a moving target which the child has to follow with a beam.
 - Play 'Tag'; jump the beam on a wall and encourage the child to catch.

Contact details

Children's Therapy Services

Telephone number: 0300 019 2936

For further general health-related information, please ask the relevant department for an information prescription or contact:

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We can supply this information in other formats, in larger print or have it translated for you. Please call the Patient Experience Team on 0300 019 8499 or email patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk for advice.

If you wish to make any comments or to ask about any research evidence used to write this leaflet, please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0300 019 8499, write to the Patient Experience Team (address above) or email patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk

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