

# Smooth pen convergence exercise

Information and advice for patients

## Orthoptics

### What is a 'smooth pen convergence exercise'?

Smooth pen convergence exercise is an exercise for your eyes that can help to improve the symptoms of convergence insufficiency. This means that the exercises will help you to be able to turn your eyes towards each other and focus on nearby objects. Your orthoptist will explain and demonstrate this exercise for you.

### How to do the exercise

1. Hold a target (such as a pen) at arm's length, at a slightly lower position.
2. Focus your eyes on the pen and smoothly bring it towards your nose, at a steady speed.
3. When the pen appears double, hold it still. Aim to get it as close as possible to your nose without it appearing double
4. Try to turn your eyes in together until the pen becomes single again, this will often take a lot of effort.  
(If you are not able to turn your eyes together to make a single image, move the pen back smoothly and slowly until it becomes single. Then practise working from this point and continue with the next step.)
5. Count how long the pen appears single at this point. This will give you an idea of how well you can maintain a single image.

After doing the exercise it is important that you relax your eyes by looking into the distance or by closing them for a minute or so. When you start the exercise you may feel increased eye strain and get headaches. This is normal, and will improve the more you do the exercise.

### How often should I do the exercises?

These exercises should only be done for a few minutes at a time, and 2-3 times throughout the day depending on the severity of the condition. Your orthoptist will tell you how many weeks you should perform the exercises for as this varies for each person.

### Follow up

You will usually be reviewed in the Orthoptic department, usually every 4 weeks while you are doing the exercises.

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### Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the orthoptic department on:

#### Birmingham and Midland Eye Centre at City Hospital

0121 507 6829

#### Sandwell General Hospital

0121 507 3202

### Further information

For more information about convergence insufficiency please see our 'Convergence insufficiency' leaflet.

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our websites [www.swbh.nhs.uk](http://www.swbh.nhs.uk), follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs and like us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs](http://www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs).

### Sources used for the information in this leaflet

- F Rowe, 'Clinical Orthoptics', 1997
- A Ansons, H Davis, 'Diagnosis and management of ocular motility disorders', 1986

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5303 or email: [swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net](mailto:swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net)



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