



Understanding vision therapy



Keith Holland & Associates
o p t o m e t r i s t s

what is vision therapy?

Vision therapy (also known as VT) is the term used to describe a wide range of activities used to improve visual skills, and enhance vision. These techniques include those traditionally known as orthoptics, but go way beyond just exercising eye muscles.

The behavioural optometrist sees the visual system as part of the overall sensory mechanism in the body - and the dominant means of acquiring information from the world about us. He believes that vision is in part a learned skill developing from birth right through in to adulthood. As such, if we are able to learn how to see, then we should also be able to train such skills, and vision therapy does just that.

what skills are involved?

Vision therapy programmes work on a number of skill areas, including:-

- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills
- Direction Skills
- Eye Movement Skills
- Focus Skills
- Centering skills
- Perceptual Skills



what effect does this have?

By concentrating on these skills the subject can learn to use the skills in an automated manner, without having to put either thought - or effort into seeing and understanding.

The effects of vision therapy can be seen in easier, more productive study and reading, better co-ordination skills, and greater confidence in the world in general. It is usual to see symptoms such as eyestrain and headaches disappear with training, and to see better place keeping and fluency in reading. Performance in sport is also usually improved - indeed, vision therapy programmes are established as a key part of high level sports training programmes.

Where does VT take place?

VT is best carried out in-practice, under the expert eye of a vision therapist, but may also be prescribed for home use - or as a combination of both approaches. In practice, the therapist may monitor activities, and modify them as soon as changes are noted; children often respond better to working with someone outside their own family, than a family member, and the discipline of going out to a therapy session often helps to encourage them to continue with home therapy as well.

What happens during the session?

VT sessions are designed to be fun, and in a session activities may include such diverse tasks as balancing on wobble boards, drawing with electronic pens, practicing focusing with special glasses, or working with 3D pictures - sometimes on a computer. Home training activities are kept very simple, and any equipment that may be required is normally supplied, or is easily available in the home. Some home therapy is available for use on home computers, guaranteed to keep a child's interests. It is vital that home activities are seen as integral to the child's progress and development, and given priority within the day, if real progress is to be seen.

Who is in charge of the session?

Sessions take place with either an optometrist, or a trained vision therapist, who works in conjunction with an optometrist. When a child is attending for a course of vision therapy we commence with an introductory, or orientation session in which our therapist will carry out several screening activities, issue the home therapy folder and discuss any relevant issues with you. We have found that this session makes the child feel at home much quicker, and facilitates the programme overall.

Please see the reverse of this leaflet for appointment guidelines and prices.

Appointment Guidelines

In general, VT is best carried out on a regular basis and we normally book patients for units of fourteen appointments, preceded by an orientation session, and with a follow-up examination taking place after each unit. At this appointment, the need for any further therapy, either at home or in practice will be discussed. We do occasionally see patients for individual sessions, chargeable at £50.00 per visit.

Appointments will be booked in advance at either weekly or fortnightly intervals, as previously agreed, and an appointment record card is issued.

Please attend the allotted time for your appointment; we may not be able to give you the full appointment time otherwise. The patient is seen for therapy on their own - parents are welcome to wait in reception, or to return for their child at least ten minutes before the end of the session. This allows us time to discuss what has been done, and to demonstrate any home activities to you. It is helpful if you avoid bringing other children with you, although we do realise this may be sometimes unavoidable.

Prices

The total charge for a 15 session therapy programme is £650 (£40 per session). This includes the final follow-up assessment, which will normally be approximately one month after in-practice sessions are completed. This fee is payable either in full at the beginning of the course (in which case a reduction of £50 will be made), or monthly in advance. Each session lasts for approximately 45 minutes.

Cancellation & Refund Procedures

Regrettably, no refunds can be made in respect of missed appointments.

However if notice has been given of the cancellation, then an alternative session may be arranged, providing this is taken within the original time frame agreed for the programme. This can be taken on another day and time, but may be with a different member of staff.

For more information or to make an appointment, please call our reception team at the St George's Road Practice on 01242 233 500 or visit us online at www.keithholland.co.uk