**Simple Eye Exercises for Lazy Eyes**

Grown-ups sometimes say don’t try to go cross-eyed. Well some eyes *can* benefit from the repeated effort, although others *will not*!

**Exercises cannot replace glasses.** Spectacles are needed if the eyes are long-sighted or short-sight but may not be the only solution.

**Exercises can train eyes to work more effectively together** but just as with any other exercise they must be done correctly, regularly and over a period of time. If done incorrectly or if the exercises are not right for your eyes they can make tired, blurry eyes worse.

**Young children whose eyes look straight[[1]](#endnote-1) when wearing their glasses may still have a *'lazy* eye'** i.e. one eye may not look to be turning but it can’t be made to see 6/6.

* *‘Patching the good eye'* should encourage the *'lazy eye'* to learn to see. This used to mean wearing a sticky Elastoplast patch for all of the day, every day but fortunately research has found that **2 hours every day** is just as effective – ***but it must be everyday till the vision improves***and needs to be done when the child is young*,* by the time a child is old enough to understand *why* it may be too late!(Smart, fun patches can be bought online – just make sure your child doesn't cheat!).
* It is important to find a fun activity for your child to do when wearing the patch. It needs to be something that does not require good vision but does make use of the vision s/he has got.
* As the vision of the ‘lazy eye’ improves a double layer of sticky tape over the spectacle lens in front of the good eye may just be enough to make the lazy eye do its share.
* ***Bribery is always good – star charts, video games and/or toys do have some uses.***

Here are some alternatives to patching for when the lazy eye is prepared to work;

**Younger eyes that are learning to read (but also older eyes) may benefit from;**

* some  [simple eye exercises (NPC)](http://www.eyesightinsights.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/simple-eye-exercises-npc.docx) that train the two eyes to work together as a team.
* or the [Cord and Beads Game](http://www.eyesightinsights.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/110815-beads-and-string.docx)

**Older children with more confident reading skills** but who have one eye that is ***'a little lazy'*** may find ***Bar Reading*** helpful. A lollipop stick or equivalent is held mid-way between the page being read and the eyes. It effectively occludes some words from one eye, but different words from the other. When both eyes are used together the whole page can be read.

1. Eyes that don’t ‘*look straight’* need different types of orthoptic exercises to the ones discussed here. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)