EYE EXERCISE - BOON FOR VISION

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ABSTRACT
Eyesight is the sense that you rely upon the most. Since we live in a world that requires eyes to routinely stare at small type and images on cell phones, computer screens, and televisions, it is important that you take steps to improve your eyesight. Poor eyesight diminishes the quality of life and could lead to expensive surgeries or partial blindness. There are, however, many solutions to keeping eyesight healthy and sharp so that person can enjoy your vision for the rest of your life. Eye yoga exercises aim to return our eyes to its natural state.

INTRODUCTION
Eye yoga exercises had existed for centuries and helped many people regain back their natural eyesight. They are easy to do and can be done anywhere and anytime. It helps us to use our eyes to their fullest capability which is not allowed in our current way of life.

In the older days, our ancestors get to see a horizon of blue sky and unlimited peripheral vision. Today, we are towered by high rise buildings and offices and we live in small spaces further limiting our chances to use our distance vision. We spent most of our time doing close up work and staring at the 15 inch computer which limits our eye movement and creates a lot of near-point stress.

Eye yoga exercises aim to return our eyes to its natural state. Eye exercises learn how to maintain optimal eye health such as avoiding eye strain and excessive near-point stress; and keeping the eye moist. These are probably the biggest factor in causing bad eyesight. Try not to use corrective lens during all these exercises.
Eye exercise is more like meditation or yoga. It helps engage mind and imagination, to relax eyes and bring about as much natural healing as possible.

EXERCISES TO STRENGTHEN EYE MUSCLES AND IMPROVE YOUR VISION-

1. **PALMING**
   - Sit quietly with eyes closed and take some deep breaths to relax yourself completely.
   - Rub the palms of your hands vigorously, until they become warm and place the palms gently over your eye lids.
   - Feel the warmth of the palms being transferred onto the eyes and the eye muscles relaxing. Your eyes are being bathed in soothing darkness.
   - Stay in this position until the heat from the hands has been completely absorbed by the eyes.
   - Keeping the eyes closed, lower the hands
   - Once again rub the palms and repeat the process at least three times

2. **BLINKING**
   - Sit comfortably with your eyes open.
   - Blink around 10 times very quickly.
   - Close your eyes and relax for 20 seconds. Slowly take your attention to your breath.
   - Repeat this exercise about 5 times.

3. **SIDEWAYS VIEWING**
   - Sit with legs straight in front of the body.
   - Now lift the arms keeping your fist closed and your thumbs pointing upward.
   - Look at a point straight in front of you in level with your eyes.
   - Keep the head in this fixed position, focus on the following one after the other, by shifting your vision to the:
     - Space between the eyebrows
     - Left thumb
     - Space between the eyebrows
     - Right thumb
     - Space between the eyebrows
Left thumb
- Repeat this exercise 10 to 20 times.
- After completing this exercise close your eyes and rest.
  Observe the following breathing pattern as you perform the above exercise
  - Inhale in the neutral position
  - Exhale while looking to the side.
  - Inhale and come back to the center.

FRONT AND SIDEWAYS VIEWING
- Sit with legs straight in front of the body
- Then place the left [closed] fist on the left knee ensuring that the thumb points upwards.
- Look at a point straight in front and in level with your eyes.
- Keeping the head in this fixed position.
- Breathing out, focus your eyes on the left thumb.
- Breathing in, focus your eyes at a point in front and in level with your eyes.
- Repeat the same process with the right thumb.
- Then close your eyes and rest.

ROTATIONAL VIEWING
- Sit with legs straight in front of your body.
- Place the left hand on the left knee.
- Hold the right fist above the right knee, with the thumb pointing upwards. Keep the elbow straight.
- Now keeping the head still, focus your eyes on the thumb.
- Make a circle with the thumb, keeping the elbow straight.
- Repeat this exercise five times each in clockwise and anti-clockwise direction.
- Repeat the process with the left thumb.
- Close and rest the eyes and relax completely.
- Observe the following breathing pattern during this exercise
  - Inhale while completing the upper arc of the circle.
  - Exhale while completing the lower arc.
UP AND DOWN VIEWING

- Sit with legs straight in front of your body.
- With both the thumbs pointing upwards, place both the fists on the knees.
- Slowly raise the right thumb keeping the arms straight. Follow the motion of the thumb upwards with the eyes.
- When the thumb is raised to the maximum, gradually bring it down to the starting position and continue to keep the eyes focused on the thumb all the while keeping the head still.
- Repeat the same process with the left thumb.
- Practice this 5 times with each thumb.
- The head and the spine should be kept straight throughout.
- Close the eyes and relax.
- Observe the following breathing pattern as you perform the above exercise
  - Inhale while raising the eyes.
  - Exhale while lowering the eyes.

PRELIMINARY NOSE TIP GAZING

- Sit in a cross-legged pose.
- Lift the right arm straight directly in front of the nose.
- Making a fist with the right hand, keeps your thumb pointing upward.
- Focus both eyes on the tip of the thumb.
- Now bend the arm and gradually bring the thumb to the tip of the nose, all the while having the eyes focused on the tip of the thumb.
- Remain in this position for a while with the thumb held at the tip of the nose with the eyes focused there.
- Continuing to gaze at the tip of the thumb, gradually straighten the arm.
- This constitutes a single round.
- Perform at least five such rounds.
- Observe the following breathing pattern as you perform the above exercise
  - Breathe in while the thumb is pulled to the tip of the nose.
  - Retain inside while holding the thumb at the tip of the nose.
  - Breathe out as the arm is straightened.
NEAR AND DISTANT VIEWING

- Stand or sit by an open window with a clear view of the horizon. Keep the arms by your side.
- Focus on the tip of the nose for 5-10 seconds.
- Repeat this for about 10 to 20 times.
- Close and relax the eyes.
- Observe the following breathing pattern
  - Inhale during close viewing.
  - Exhale during distant viewing.

After completing all the above exercises, lie in shavasan (corpse pose) for a few minutes and relax yourself completely. Breathe gently and normally, and do not resist any thoughts or sensations during the exercise.

Many eye disorders are related to the malfunctioning of the ocular muscles caused by chronic mental and emotional tensions. Eye exercise (Yoga) techniques help to alleviate various disorders related to defects in the eye muscles such as myopia and hypermetropia. Practicing these exercises regularly for a few months can go a long way in facilitating the normal functioning of our eyes.

CONCLUSION

Hence eye exercises are aimed at toning up of eye muscles. They also help for relaxation of the eyes. Several studies were undertaken to evaluate the efficacy of eye exercise in different refractive errors, ambylopia (lazy eye) and squint (deviation of eye).

REFERENCES