

Patient information factsheet

Dot card exercise

This factsheet explains what a dot card is and how to perform the exercise safely at home. We hope it helps to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of this factsheet.

What is a dot card?

A dot card is a simple exercise designed to strengthen your eye muscles by encouraging you to bring both your eyes in towards your nose at the same time. The exercise involves a thin strip of cardboard (approximately 30cm long) that has a straight line through the centre of it, on which there are a number of small dots.

Why do I need to perform this exercise?

Your brain controls all of your eye movements. When you look at a nearby object, your eyes move inward to focus on it. This movement is called convergence. It helps you to do close work, such as reading.

The dot card exercise is usually recommended for people who have convergence insufficiency. Convergence insufficiency is a condition which causes one or both eyes to drift outward when you look at something close by. If you have this condition, you may find it difficult to focus on nearby objects. You may also experience:

- headaches
- double vision
- blurred vision

Performing the dot card exercise over a period of time can help to strengthen the eye muscles involved in convergence and can gradually reduce these symptoms.

How do I perform this exercise?

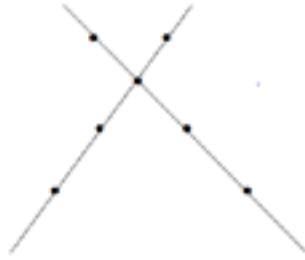
To perform this exercise, you will need to follow the steps below:

1. Make sure you are sat in a comfortable position. Then, keeping your head up, hold the dot card just under your nose in a slightly downwards position.
2. With both eyes, look at the dot which is furthest away from your nose. If this dot appears as a single dot, the rest of the dots will make an 'A' shape (as shown here). If you see two dots or have double vision, you will need to refocus your eyes until you see a single dot. This dot must be held as a single image before you move on to the next dot.



Patient information factsheet

3. Move your focus to the next dot along the line. The two lines should begin to turn from an 'A' to an 'X' shape as you move down the line towards your nose (as shown below).



4. When you get to the dot closest to your nose, the two lines should form a 'V' shape (as shown below). This is difficult, so don't worry if you aren't able to get this far.



The object of this exercise is to maintain a single image of each dot on the card as you move towards your nose.

How often should I perform this exercise?

We will advise you on when and how often you should perform this exercise. We usually recommend performing this exercise for two minutes, several times a day.

Are there any risks?

You may experience mild headaches and sore eyes the first few times you perform the dot card exercise. This is normal and these symptoms should ease as you continue to perform the exercise.

It is very important that for every period of exercise you do, you must rest your eyes for the same amount of time afterwards. You can do this by looking into the distance.

If you experience any dizziness or pain while performing the exercise, stop immediately and contact us.

How long will I have to perform this exercise for?

The length of time you will need to perform this exercise for will depend on how weak your eye muscles are. We will regularly review your treatment plan and discuss this with you during your appointments.

Patient information factsheet

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Orthoptic department

Telephone: **023 8120 4789** (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm)

Useful links

www.uhs.nhs.uk/departments/eyes/departments/orthoptics

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