Protecting Vision in the Workplace

The use of digital devices, including personal computers, tablets and cell phones, continues to increase. And, the impact of prolonged usage can often be felt in the eye. In fact, because of extended use of these devices, close to 70 percent of American adults experience some form of digital eyestrain, according to a new report from The Vision Council. Symptoms of digital eyestrain can include dry eyes, blurred vision and headaches.

To highlight the central role computers and smartphones play for the modern workforce, Prevent Blindness, the nation's oldest volunteer eye health and safety group, has declared March Workplace Eye Wellness Month. The goal is to provide employers and employees with free information on topics ranging from eyestrain to industrial eye safety in order to promote eye health at work.

Office workers can take a few simple steps to help prevent eyestrain and fatigue. Prevent Blindness suggests:

1. Visit an eye doctor for a dilated eye exam to make sure you are seeing clearly and to detect any potential vision issues.
2. Place your screen 20 to 26 inches away from your eyes and a little bit below eye level.
3. Use a document holder placed next to your computer screen. It should be close enough so you don't have to swing your head back and forth or constantly change your eye focus.
4. Adjust the text size on the screen to a comfortable level.
5. Change your lighting to lower glare and harsh reflections. Glare filters over your computer screen can also help.
6. Use a chair you can adjust.
7. Choose screens that can tilt and swivel. A keyboard that you can adjust is also helpful.

The Vision Council recommends the 20-20-20 break: every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break and look at something 20 feet away.

Source: preventingblindness.org website