



VISUAL HYGIENE

There is an intimate relationship between posture, working distance, desk surface and lenses.

Pioneering experiments by Dr Darrel Boyd Harmon and subsequent research by Drs. John Pierce and Steven Greenspan clearly prove a reduction of stress and improved performance when conditions are arranged properly for near-point visual activities such as reading and writing. The following changes were observed: reduced heart rate, more regular and deeper breathing and reduced neck muscle and overall body tensions.

1. Do all near point activity at HARMON distance of slightly further. This is the **distance from the centre of the middle knuckle to the centre of the elbow measured on the outside of the arm**. Working at the Harmon distance reduces near point visual stress.
2. **Be AWARE** of space between self and the page when reading. Also, be aware of things around and beyond the book.
3. When reading, occasionally **look off** at a specific distance object and let its details come into focus. Maintain awareness of other objects and details surrounding it. Do this at least at the end of each page.
4. When studying, place a bookmark 3 to 4 pages ahead. Get up and move around for at least one minute each time you reach the bookmark.
5. **Sit UPRIGHT**. Practice holding your back arched while you reading and write. Avoid reading while lying on your stomach on the floor or bed. Avoid reading in bed, unless sitting reasonably upright.
6. Provide for **adequate general illumination**, as well as good central illumination, at the near task. The illumination on the task should be about three times that of the surrounding background.
7. **Tilt the book** up about 20 degrees (this slopes up about 10cm in 33cm). A tilt top for the desk can be made by screwing two door stops to the back of a piece of 1/2 inch plywood or a drawing board, and two rubber knobs to the near end so it doesn't slip off the desk.



Which child is working closest to their HARMON distance?

This can be used for reading, studying, writing. It usually enables working further away from the task than when the task is flat on the desk.

8. **Do not sit any closer to TV** than 1.80m to 2.50m and be sure to sit upright. Maintain good posture.
9. When riding in a vehicle, **avoid reading** and other near activity such as computer games. Encourage looking at sights in the distance for interest and identification.
10. Encourage **outdoor play** or sports activities that require seeing beyond arm's length.
11. When outdoors **sight a distance object** at about eye level. At the same time, be aware of where things are on all sides.
12. Walk with head up, eyes wide open and **look TOWARD**, not at, objects.
13. Become very conscious of the background of the objects you **look TOWARD**, be it a person, print on a page, an electric sign, the TV or any other object.



POSTURE

LIGHTING

FOCUS

Text from Parents Active for Vision Education (P.A.V.E.)

“Guidance to enhance, transform & preserve your vision”