

Pumping

What you do. Rhythmically change focus back and forth between a near object and a far object, briefly looking at the smallest detail you can see on each object.

Benefits. Pumping exercises the focusing mechanism and improves control of the extraocular muscles.

How to do it:

Step 1. Choose a near object. Use your finger, thumb, pen, trinket, or piece of jewelry. Hold it no more than six inches away from your face.

Step 2. Choose a far object. Use something across the room, such as a painting or doorknob, or something you can see out a window, such as a tree, building, or traffic light. This object should be as far away from you as possible, yet you should just be able to see some detail in the object. We recommend using an object at least 15 feet away, but the distance can be less.

Step 3. Keep the near object stationary.

Step 4. Change focus every couple of seconds:
near... far... near... far... near... far... near...
far...



Step 5. At the end of each change of focus, look at the smallest detail you can see on the object. For example, if your thumb is the near object, look at a crease of skin or a line on your skin; if a tree is the far object, look at a single leaf. When doing Pumping with the Daily Exercise Video, use interesting objects with

many small details to avoid boredom. Or you can use the small Word Chart as the near object and the large Word Chart as the far object.

Step 6. Blink frequently and select a different detail each time you change focus.

Advanced. Over time, as you practice this exercise, hold the near object closer and closer. The goal is to continually challenge your ability to see detail as you change focus.

Troubleshooting.

People who have “convergence problems” (difficulty turning the eyes inward or crossing them) may get headaches from Pumping. If you feel a headache developing, immediately close your eyes, breathe slowly and deeply, and wait for it to go away. Then resume Pumping. If the headache returns, close your eyes again and breathe slowly and deeply. Repeat the cycle, trying to extend your Pumping by a few seconds each time. In this way, you can quickly work your way through the problem until you can do the exercise without discomfort. An extra benefit of overcoming convergence-related headaches is that you may experience an increase in reading speed and/or eliminate motion sickness.