

Dyslexia and Visual Issues

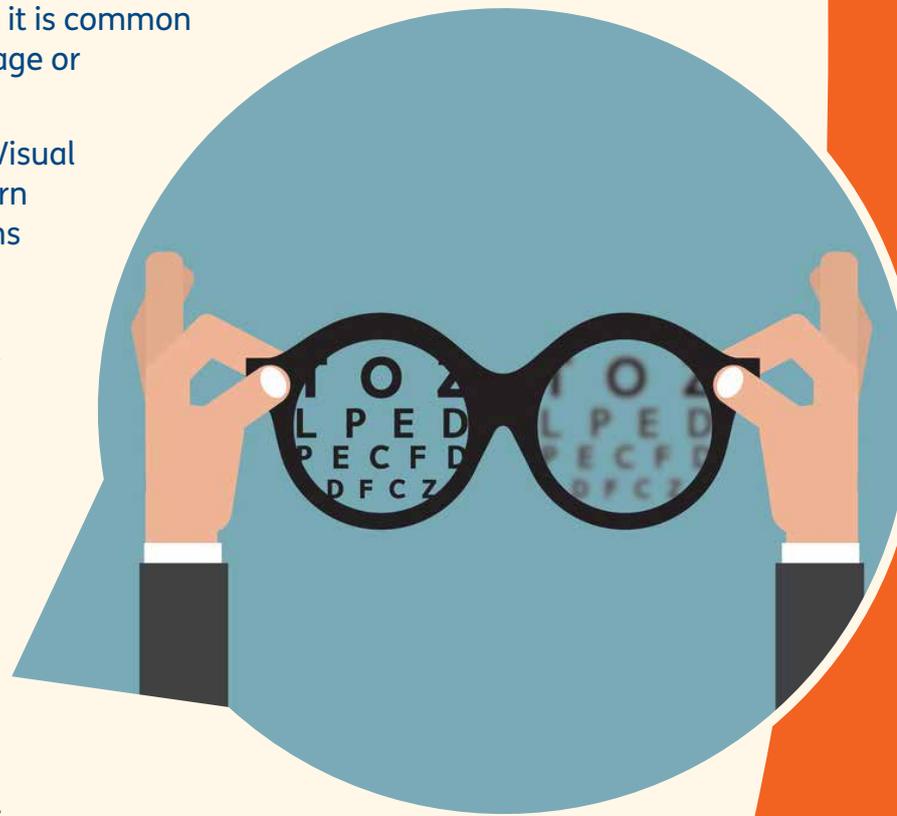
There are visual and visual perceptual (the way the brain deals with visual information) problems which can cause difficulties similar to dyslexia.

These difficulties might not be detected in a standard eye test and can occur in children or adults with perfect vision. Not everyone with dyslexia will experience these visual problems, and people without dyslexia can also have these difficulties.

All of these conditions can be treated.

Types of problems

- **Binocular Instability:** binocular vision co-ordinates the eyes. When both eyes work together, rotating and focusing, this results in a clear single image.
- **Eye Movement Control:** in reading, the eyes make short rapid movements interspersed with short fixations. When these movements are poorly controlled, it is common to miss words, lose your place in a passage or struggle to track along a line of text.
- **Meares-Irlen Syndrome** also known as **Visual Stress:** this is a sensitivity to light, pattern and flicker which can result in distortions of the text and the illusion of the print moving or blurring. This can lead to nausea, and headaches. Visual Stress is more common in people with dyslexia.
- **Visual Discrimination:** the ability to recognise similarities and differences between images and patterns, which is a basic requirement for reading and spelling.
- **Visual Memory:** the ability to recall visual information such as words and shapes. This can cause difficulties with learning sight vocabulary, spelling and letter orientation.



You may experience some of the following:

- Distortion when viewing a page of print
- Letters appear to move or jump about
- Patterns or colours in text
- Glare when reading
- Difficulties following a line of text or column of numbers
- Sore eyes/eyestrain
- Tiredness when reading
- Blurring of words and letters
- Headaches/migraines

What can help?

An assessment by a qualified optometrist/orthoptist. It is very important to have vision assessed by someone who can look at a range of visual conditions as many of the symptoms or difficulties can be caused by more than one condition. It is also common for more than one visual or visual perceptual condition to be present.

Other things that can help

- Having a conversation with a child about what they see when they look at text
- Removing the contrast of black text on white paper
- Using coloured rulers/overlays
- Using tinted paper to write on, rather than using white paper
- Glasses with special lenses to suit your requirements
- Performing exercises might reduce some of the difficulties
- Clear fonts, such as Century Gothic, Comic Sans or Verdana, minimum size 12
- 'Dyslexia Friendly Formats' and 'Visual Issues FAQ' at:
www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/our-leaflets

Further information

- Reading Through Colour by Arnold Wilkins
- Dyslexia and Vision by Bruce J. W. Evans
- Dyslexia and Us: A collection of Personal Stories by Dyslexia Scotland
- Dyslexia Scotland Helpline 0344 800 8484
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Dyslexia Scotland

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