

Four-Square Chart Fixations

The purpose of these charts is to improve eye-speed, concentration, coordination and accuracy through left-to-right organization, rhythmic flow, accuracy of fixation and the ability to process complex figure-ground information.

You will need: 4 Letter Charts (included), a Stopwatch and a simple chart to keep track of your progress

Procedure:

1. Place the 4 charts on a wall to form a square approximately 8 feet x 8 feet. The center of this configuration should be at eye level.
2. There are several chart sequences you can use. Here is a brief introduction to a few of them, in order of difficulty. Start with the first sequence. Do it for the first week then switch to the second sequence for the second week, third sequence for 3rd week, and finally the fourth sequence for the 4th week. These charts should be used for 5-10 minutes per day.
3. When you have finished the first month, go back and compare your time on each sequence to see how much you have improved.
4. To make these exercises more difficult you can add the following variables:
 - a. Stand on a balance board while reading the charts
 - b. Read the charts while music is playing in the background (something you like to listen to)

Read the charts while tossing and catching a baseball, softball or the ball of your chosen sport.

Sequence 1 – start with top Left chart, read entire 1st **horizontal** line. Go to top Right chart, read entire 1st line. Go to bottom Left chart, read entire 1st line. Go to bottom Right chart, read entire 1st line. Then go back to top Right chart and proceed as above on the 2nd, 3rd and last line on each chart.

Sequence 2 – start with top Left chart, read entire 1st **vertical** line. Go to top Right chart, read entire 1st line. Go to bottom Left chart, read entire 1st line. Go to bottom Right chart, read entire 1st line. Then go back to top Right chart and proceed as above on the 2nd, 3rd and last line on each chart.

Sequence 3 – start with top Left chart, read the 1st letter of the top line. Go to top Right chart, read the 1st letter of the top line. Go to the bottom Left chart, read the 1st letter of the top line. Go to the bottom Right chart, read the 1st letter of the top line. Go back up to the top Right chart read the 2nd letter of the top line and proceed as above.

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Letter Focus (Hart) Chart Instructions

The equipment needed is a Letter Chart Large and small (both included) and tape.

Here is an exercise that we use that works well to increase accommodative flexibility. **Accommodative flexibility** The ability of your eyes to change focus back and forth from near objects to far objects—an important skill in hitting and fielding. It will also help improve your saccadic eye movement which are rapid eye movements.

Method #1 Sit or stand six to eight feet from the wall. Tape the large chart to the wall at eye level. Hold the small chart in your hand 16 inches away from your nose at eye level, so the top line of the distance chart is just visible over the top edge of the near card. Then shift your focus from near to far repeating each letter, which should be clear before moving on.

Method #2 sit or stand and place the large chart at eye level. Look at the first letter while being aware of the last letter. Shift the eyes directly to the last letter. While looking at the last letter, be aware peripherally of the next letter down on the first row, and then shift. Continue shifting first to the last working your way down the column, always maintaining peripheral awareness before you shift. When you get to the bottom, begin again this time with the second letter in on each side. Continue then with the third and eighty, then fourth and seventh, then fifth and sixth.

Central vision is directed by peripheral cues. By being consciously aware of the periphery, the goal is to have the eye movements become more direct and efficient.

When you become efficient at both these exercises (you have no problem focusing using the two methods described above) you can make things a little more difficult by using the following:

1. Increase the distance to the far chart
2. Decrease the distance of the near chart to the player's eyes.
3. Increase the speed
4. Increase the speed of shifting from side to side, allowing the peripheral expanded awareness to become more automatic.
5. Add some background music to make it more difficult to concentrate.
6. Run in place while reading the charts.
7. Stand on a balance beam while reading the charts.

Peripheral Expansion Chart Directions

Improves peripheral vision and field awareness

Place the chart in front of you at eye level.

Focus at all time on the red circle in the middle.

With your peripheral vision, call out the first four letters closest to the circle

Then move out one range to the next four letters and so on.

Do 10 repetitions, working from the red dot to the outside ring.

Why wear an eye patch?

The simple reason to wear an eye patch, in the sports world, is because everyone has a dominant eye. Here is how to determine which of your eyes is dominant in five steps:

1. Hold your arms out in front of you
2. Make a triangle by overlapping the space between index finger and thumb with the same space on your opposite hand. Make a peep sight with the webs of your thumbs, and stare at an object in the distance.
3. Look at an object through the triangle hole made by your hands, preferably something round like a door knob.
4. Focus on the object, not your hands.
5. Now close one of your eyes. If you still see the object with your left eye open you are left eyed. If you still see the object with your right eye open you are right eyed.

In many cases the dominant eye is also stronger than the non-dominant eye. Wearing an eye patch over the eye with better vision forces your brain to use the weaker eye, instead of ignoring it. By training the brain to use the weaker eye, your binocular vision can develop quicker. The use of both eyes is critical in sports.