

# PERIPHERAL AWARENESS ACTIVITIES FOR POST-CONCUSSION PATIENTS

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- I first learned about post concussion therapy from Dr. Deann Fitzgerald many years ago. She recommended to always start and end visual rehabilitation therapy with peripheral vision activities.
- I am always looking for new ideas and new activities that I can send home for home therapy.
- I am a "collector." Most of these activities came from colleagues over many years. I may have added parts, but I did not create most of them.
- I have found that the same activities that help post concussion patients have helped many post long COVID patients.
- Sometimes these activities are the only ones that patients can tolerate at the beginning of therapy.

## Shelley, 68 yr-old, 2 ½ yrs post-concussion

### ◦ **SYMPTOMS:**

- Vertigo
- Head feels unstable
- Nausea
- Fatigue on computer and phone
- Light sensitivity on computer
- Diplopia on right gaze

## Huge Surprise

- We did one peripheral awareness activity, and she said, "I think I'm going to cry." She was already crying. And then she asked, "Why am I crying?"
- I told her, "You have turned off your peripheral vision for 2 ½ years. We just turned back on the part of your brain that processes peripheral vision."
- Afterwards she said she felt so much better.
- I try to start and end all therapy sessions with a peripheral vision activity.

## Vision Therapy Activities for Peripheral Vision

### ◦ 1. PERIPHERAL WALK:

- Outdoors: Look straight ahead. Be aware of objects in periphery; sides, up, down
- Hallway: Place Post-its or other targets on the walls. Look straight. Tap or point to the different targets on both sides as you walk forward and back down the hall.
- Bean Bag drop: Place paper plates or sheets of paper randomly on the floor on both sides of where you are walking. Look straight and drop beanbags on the plates while walking forward and back.

### 2. OBJECT COUNTING:

Look at a space that has many objects. Fixate a center point and name as many objects you can see in your peripheral vision in 30-60 seconds.

### 3. PERIPHERAL FINGER TAP: Needs a partner

Look at another person's eyes. They place their fingers in the periphery, and you have to tap them as they move them to different areas, from in close to farther away on their sides.

### 4. HAND MIRROR GAME: Needs a partner

Look at other person's eyes. They hold up their hands, palms forward on each side. They move their hands in the periphery, and you have to keep your hands almost touching their hands (but not) as they move.

- **5. BILATERAL LINES AND ARCS:**

- This is done with hands on a wall.
- Place a Post-it at center for fixation, at nose level.
- Place hands on either side, equidistant from target.
- Move both hands away and toward center, being aware of hands.
- Wiggle fingers and tap wall to increase awareness.
- You can make straight lines and arcs, starting closer to center and moving farther away from center as awareness increases.
- This is somewhat like bilateral Chalkboard Lines and the arms' part of Angels.

- **6. CLOCK CHART: 2 Ways**

- Label 12 Post-its 1-12. Place an "X" on a Post-it, centered just below eye level. Place the 12 numbers around "X" like a clock.
- A. Look at "X." Tap 1, Tap X, Tap 2, Tap X...Use the right hand 1-6. Use the Left hand 7-12. Then repeat counterclockwise 12 to 1, ALWAYS FIXATING "X."
- "Explode" the numbers, making them farther apart.
- B. Look at "X," tap "X," Look at 1, Tap 1, Look at "X," Tap "X," Look at 2, Tap 2, Look at "X," Tap "X"...ALWAYS LOOKING AT EACH NUMBER AND "X."
- "Explode" the numbers, making them farther apart.

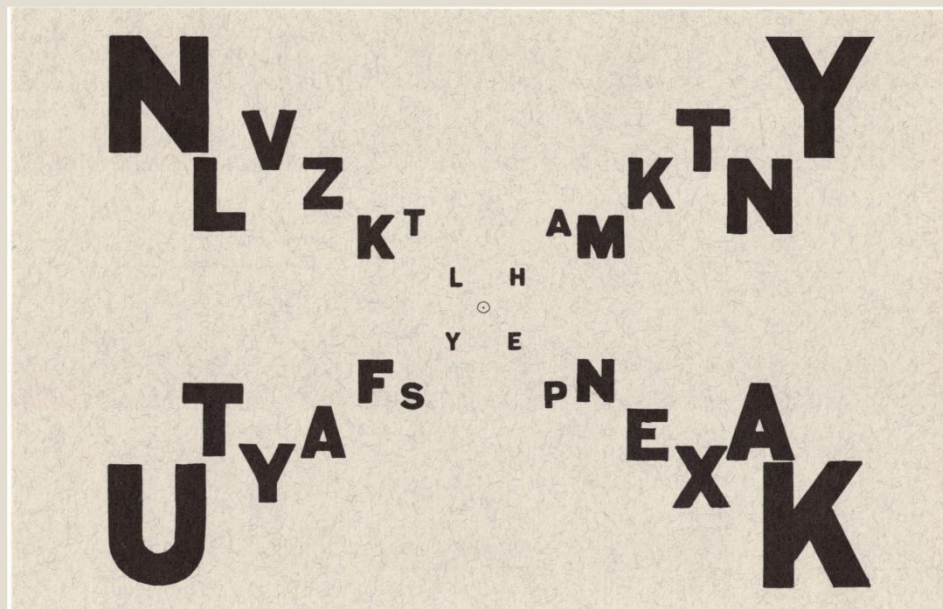
- **7. PERIPHERAL FORM CARDS:**

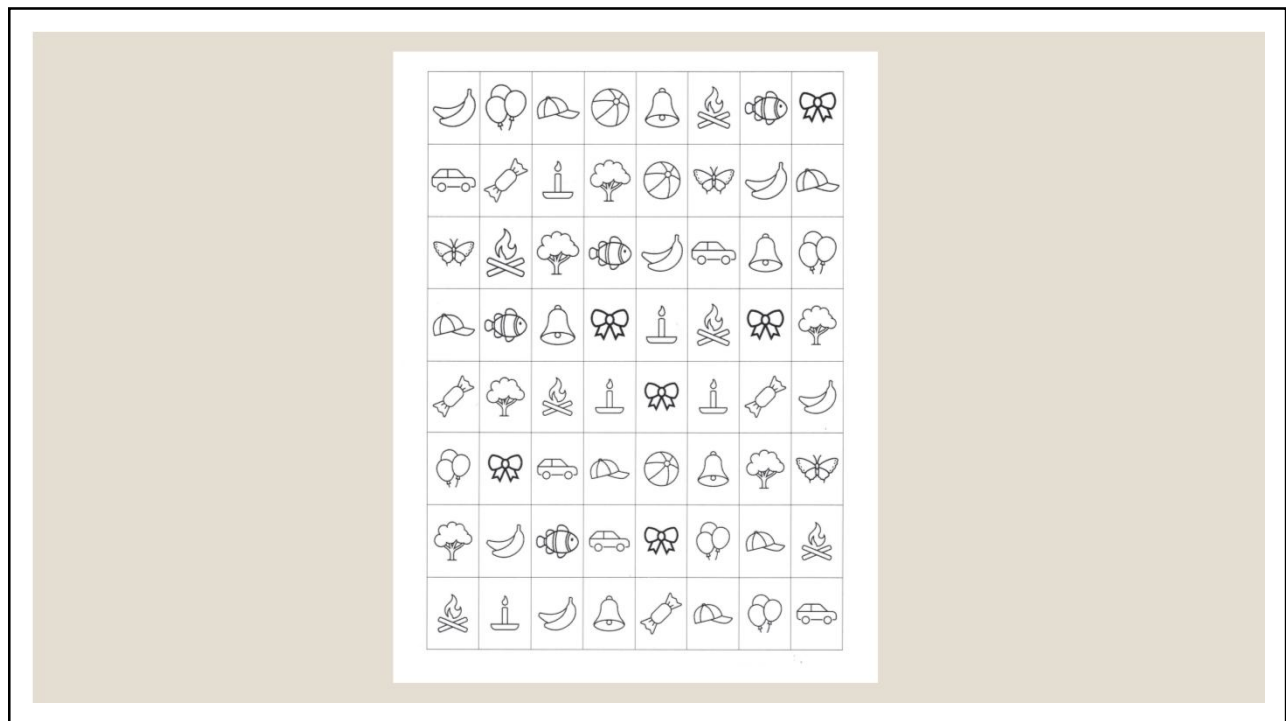
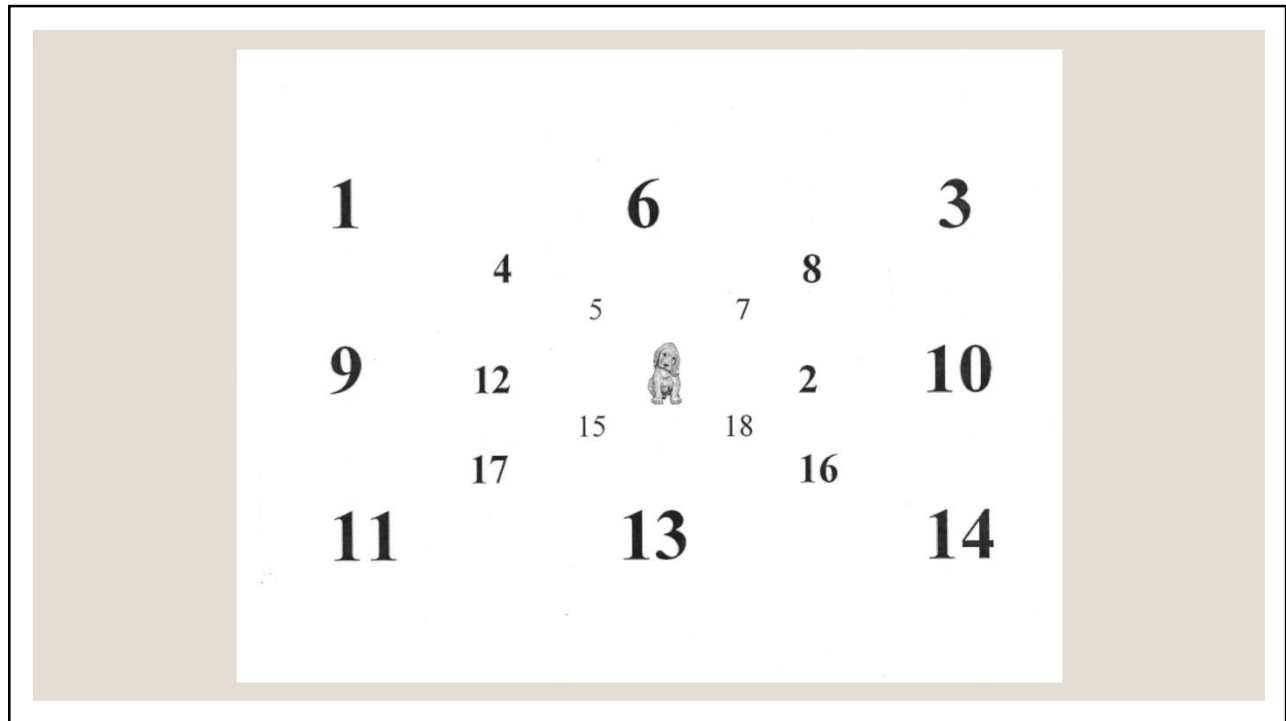
- A. MACDONALD CARD: Hold the card about 14 inches from your face.
- Look at center dot.
- Be aware of largest letters, seeing the 4 corners and peripheral targets, always looking at center. Be aware of the smallest letters. Next the medium size ones, and then the largest. This can also be done largest to smallest.
- The goal is to bring the card closer and closer, thereby pushing the targets farther into periphery.
- B. DOG CHART: (from [eyecanlearn.com](http://eyecanlearn.com)) Stand with card just below eye level, about 1 foot from target.
- Look at the center dog.
- You can follow the same instructions as the MacDonald card. Also look for the numbers 1-18, 18-1, all the odd numbers, then the even numbers...
- Stand closer and closer to the card...

- **8. Big Swings:**

- This is done standing.
- Basic exercise: Start facing forward. Swing arms, head, and body to the right side as far as it is comfortable. Come back to center and swing to the left.
- Add 2 picture Hart charts (from Rivka Moshayev) or letter Hart charts, 1 on each side. Swing to the right and state the first picture or letter on the right chart. Swing to the left and state the 2<sup>nd</sup> target on the left side. Swing right and state the 3<sup>rd</sup> target on the right chart...
- You could use 1 picture chart and 1 letter chart to make it harder.
- Start with the 2 charts at your sides. Step forward or move signs back slightly to increase the stretch and the peripheral awareness.
- The goal is to have both targets on the back wall.

- **Other Peripheral Awareness Ideas:**
- Be aware of the periphery/border of your computer or phone when using screens.
- When parked or stopped at a traffic light, see how far you can see on each side while looking straight ahead.
- Do the same while watching television.
- I find that patients feel better while and after doing peripheral activities. This seems to have the quickest impact for post-concussion patients.







## For discussion:

- Do you have any other peripheral activities to add to this list?
- Thank you!