

Vision Therapy Ideas

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Visual tracking is also known as saccades and pursuits. Saccades are when the eyes focus and then re-focus on another object. Visual pursuits are when the eyes are sustained on a moving focal point. When using the following vision therapy activities, follow this progression:

- Allow head movement first.
- Start by covering one eye, then using two.
- To make it more difficult, add a metronome to add rhythm to activities.
- Try doing the activities in a variety of positions- on the balance board, therapy ball, kneeling or other positions.

1) Suspended swinging ball or slow moving object: Put shapes or letters on it. Start with lying on your back or on hands and knees. Call out letters with ball moving slow to fast, small movements to large.

2) Flashlight/penlight games: Have eyes follow a pattern on the wall or ceiling. Begin with predictable patterns, and then use patterns drawn on large paper. Spell or draw using penlight or flashlight.

3) Balloons: Keep balloon in the air or play balloon volleyball. Kneeling with a string for a net can be fun.

4) Letter or symbol charts: Use one chart to start with and then require re-focusing on a second chart. Point to the item you want child to call out. Use different patterns, such as first then last in row, columns, and diagonals. Then provide a pattern for them to do on their own, like call out every third letter. Have them read letters from a card in front of them followed by one placed on the wall (5 to 10 feet away). Try using different patterns: read every other letter looking back and forth from wall to chart, or read letters in order. You can also use worksheets and books for this. Add rhythm, change positions, and add balance to the activity.

5) "Where is ___?" Scan for named objects in a room. Encourages searching with eyes.

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6) Convergence activities: Follow object moving close to eyes and away from eyes without losing focus.

7) Magazine letter tracking: Pick a letter; circle all the ___'s. Can also do words, such as of, a, the, and.

8) Scanning activities: Make 2 rows of numbers (1 to 10) on opposite sides of an 8" x 11" paper. Place vertically 4 feet away. Call out the numbers, 1:1, 2:2, etc. Then do 1:2, 2:3, 3:4, or 1:3, 5:7, etc. looking back and forth, side to side. Can turn paper vertically. Can also use letters, shapes, words, pictures, etc. You can do this near and far away (10 feet).

9) Eye-resting strategy (helpful for any child with eye tracking problems or one eye that wanders): Cross hands and lean forward. Press on closed eyes lightly for several seconds. Can use swim goggles that are painted black to provide a visual break.

Modification: Another resting strategy that is good for anyone working on a computer is to place the computer by a window so the student does not focus on the computer for too long. The window encourages the student to change focus from near to far for a visual break.

10) Rotating pegboard game: Place a pegboard on lazy Susan or old phonograph. Visual scanning is needed while performing the activity.

11) Finding puzzle pieces or letters in a field of stuffed toys or cards: This can also be done on a scooter board or prone in a swing.

These activities were compiled from the following conference notes:

1. From Eyesight to Insight: Visual/Vestibular Assessment and Treatment by Mary Kawar, MS, OTR and Dr. Carle Hillier, OD, FCOVD, August 9-10, 2002.
2. Understanding and Managing Visual Deficits: A Guide for Occupational Therapists by Mitchell Scheiman, OD, June 20 and 21, 2002.