

Dyslexia and Visual Issues

Visual and visual perceptual issues can affect how we see the world and influence our writing and our reading. They do not cause dyslexia but can affect how we see text and make reading more laborious and uncomfortable, affecting how we learn to read.

Some of these difficulties might not be detected in a routine eye test and can occur in children or adults with perfect vision. Not everyone with dyslexia will experience these visual problems, although they do have more impact on dyslexic readers and are more common. People who are not dyslexic can also have these difficulties and struggle to read as a result.

All of these conditions can be treated by an eye care professional.

Types of visual problems:

- **Binocular Instability:** binocular vision co-ordinates the eyes. When both eyes work together, rotating and focusing, this results in a clear single image but when not efficient there can be blurring, headaches and visual discomfort after short periods of reading.
- **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.
- **Visual stress, previously known as Meares Irlen Syndrome 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. The symptoms of visual stress are more easily seen when you struggle with reading because you look more at words.
- **Visual perception :** the ability to recognise similarities and differences, see subtle changes in text (like horse and house) and remember what you see (visual memory) require good visual perceptual processing. Poor visual perception can account for some of the common errors young readers have.

