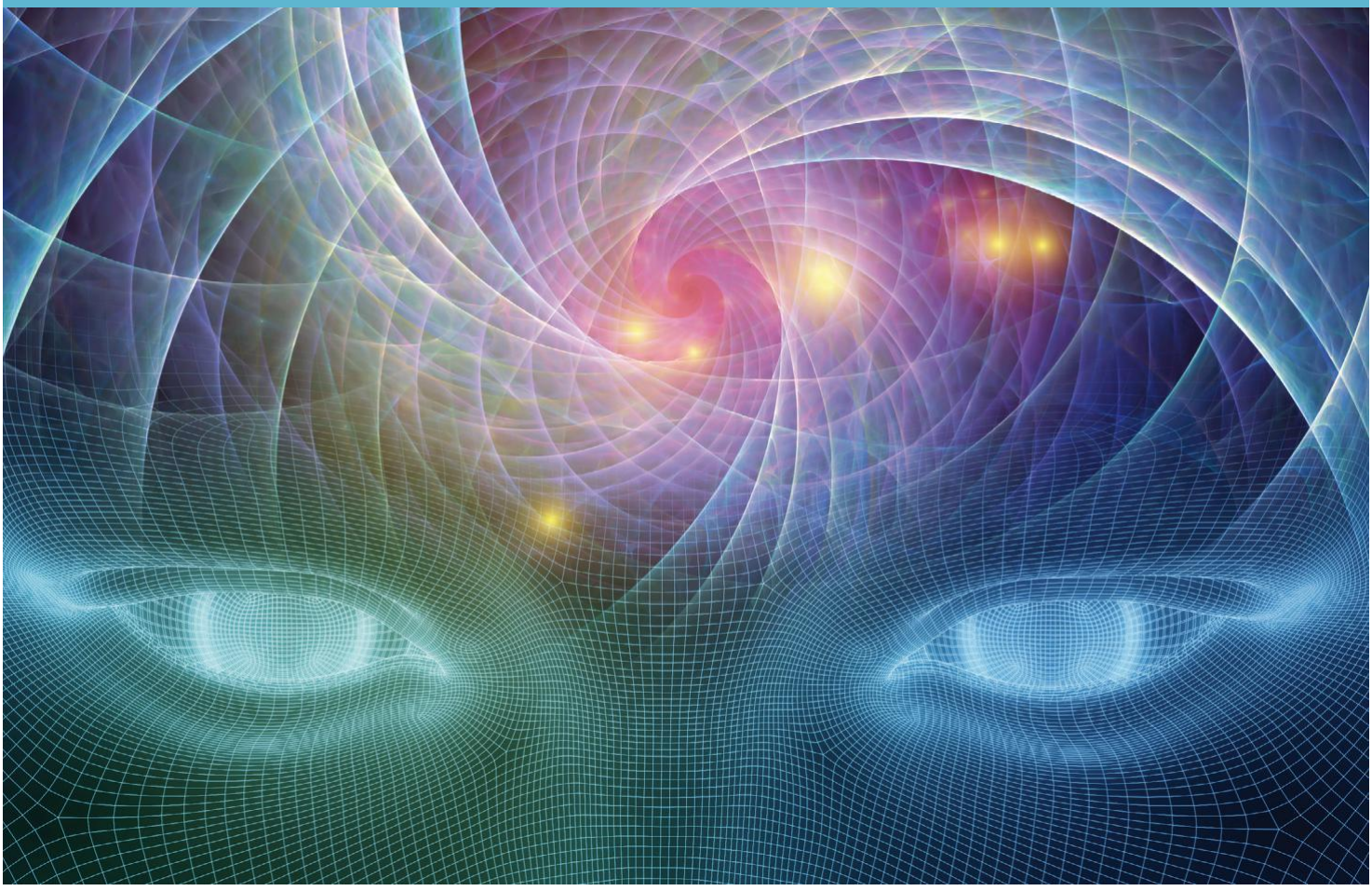
BIOS | BRITISH AND IRISH ORTHOPTIC SOCIETY

Large Print Version

# Reduced vision following stroke and brain injury

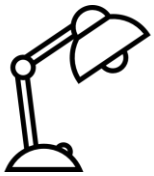


# Reduced vision following stroke and brain injury

A vision test has established that you have reduced vision. This leaflet offers advice and useful tips which will aid in the enhancement of your residual vision. Your Orthoptist will be able to discuss any concerns you may have about low vision and offer advice about which techniques are most suitable for you.

## Practical ways to enhance vision

A combination of the following practical advice, specialist equipment and useful tips may also be used to compensate for the various visual changes that you may experience with vision loss:



### The use of lighting

- Moving from a well-lit room to a darker room, and vice versa, may cause problems if you have low vision. Using bright, consistent lighting throughout your home can make it easier for you to see.
- Additional lighting can be fixed to the underside of your cupboards to provide extra light exactly where you need it. These should be carefully positioned to reduce glare.
- An angle poise lamp may help you with close up work. Shine the light directly on the task that you are doing, for example illuminating the pages of a book or newspaper. It is often best to position the light in between yourself and whatever you are looking at.

- When using natural daylight it is best to make sure the light does not cause shadows or dark areas for maximum benefit.
- Too much lighting can cause glare. Glare is often caused by light coming from above or from the side; an angle poise lamp may help with this. Sun visors or hats may help outside because they shield the eye from light above. You may find sunglasses with side shields useful.

Try different types of lighting to find the one that suits you best.

## Adjustments in the home

- Use contrasting colours around the home, for example, different coloured plates, trays or tablecloths.
- Change the colour of your door handles so that they contrast against the door.

- Try using a different coloured strip around light switches to help you find them.
- Try using a large black felt tip to write notes that may be easier for you to see.
- Use light cups for dark coloured drinks or dark cups for light coloured drinks.
- Use a telephone with large numbered buttons to make it easier to see.
- Use raised stick on buttons (these are called bump-ons) for appliances such as the setting on your washing machine or cooker.

These are just a few examples of how contrast can work well. There are many ways you could do this around the home to make it easier for you to see. Your local Social Services department will have a rehabilitation officer who can help you with changes in the home.

## Leisure Activities

- Crosswords are available in large print.
- Large print and talking books are available. Your rehabilitation adviser can help you find these or visit your local library.
- Sitting nearer to the television or even slightly off to the side may make it easier to enjoy your favourite programmes. Your Orthoptist will be able to advise you.
- Computers/tablets can be very useful if you have low vision as it is possible to set the font (text size) to large letter size so it is easier to read.
- Many people find it easier to read print on a yellow background.
- Use contrast. Paint garden tools bright colours so they stand out against grass or soil. When cooking, use different coloured chopping boards for contrasting with food.

## Use of magnifiers

There are many different types of magnifiers; the type of magnifier you need for a task will depend on the level of detail you need to see, the lighting conditions and how long a task takes to complete. For example a magnifier with a light attached will help make the object brighter and easier to see. You may also need to consider weight, portability and your ability to hold and keep a lens steady. Please seek advice from your Orthoptist or local low vision team when buying and using one.

## Falls

You may be at risk of falling if you have reduced vision.

You can help prevent a fall by making your home safe, removing any clutter, ensuring carpets are firmly secured and always take care on the stairs.

Wearing the correct glasses when moving around your home is important to prevent falls.

When you are moving around outside it may help to use single vision glasses.

Try to avoid a large or sudden change in your glasses prescription.

## Driving

If your vision falls below the legal standard set by DVLA for driving, you will be advised about this during your eye test.

You must be able to read (with glasses or contact lenses, if necessary) a car number plate made after 1 September 2001 from 20 metres.

You must also have an adequate field of vision - your orthoptist can tell you about this and do a test.

## Registering as sight impaired

When you visit the hospital your eye clinic specialist will decide, based on the results of your sight test whether you can be registered as having sight impairment.

Your specialist will discuss the benefits of registering as sight impaired and, should you consent to going ahead, will complete a ‘certificate of visual impairment’ form, which you will then both sign.

This certificate is then sent to your local Social Services department. They will complete the registration process and this may involve a social worker visiting you at home.

You will receive a copy of the certificate of visual impairment form and a copy will be sent to your GP.

**You do not have to register as sight impaired if you don't want to. Your name can also be removed from the register at any time you wish.**

If you do decide to register as sight impaired certain concessions or benefits may be available to you, more information is available.

## Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLO)

Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLOs) work closely with medical and nursing staff in eye clinics, and sensory teams in social services. They provide those recently diagnosed with an eye condition with the practical and emotional support which they need to understand their diagnosis, deal with their sight loss and maintain their independence. Your orthoptist can advise you on how to contact your nearest ECLO.

Your **Orthoptist** will be able to advise you further on other techniques which may help you **cope** for your **reduced level of vision.**

This leaflet was made by the Stroke and Neurological Rehabilitation Clinical Advisory Group in July 2021

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see www.orthoptics.org.uk/ for more information