

An Eye for Yoga

Sunday, 10 February 2008

Last Updated Tuesday, 26 February 2008

Simple eye relaxing exercises that can be done anywhere

Do you yoga? Those with yogaphobia may be scared of pretzel postures and other body bending positions while enthusiasts may not be able to survive a day without performing a series of asanas. Beginners, though, will find that eye yoga is as simple as peeling bananas and furthermore it can help keep peekers blinking beautifully.

The Optimum Eyes Health Workshop, organised by skincare brand Origins, shared how yoga exercises can promote eye health and beauty. "Some exercises can be used as therapy for certain eye conditions. You can do them every day or when needed, like after staring at a computer screen," says yoga instructor

"The exercises will help strengthen the muscles around the eyes and enhance your eyesight. At the same time, they allow you to meditate for peace of mind."

Origins education executive, adds that the skin around the eyes needs special care. "Women use eye cream every day but some may overlook that cleansing is the first step of eye care. Eye makeup needs to be removed properly and gently so as not to irritate the eyes," she notes. "Like other parts of the body, the eyes can benefit from a daily exercise and eye yoga can be a part of a woman's beauty ritual."

So, besides a dab of eye serum and cream, bright eyed girls can give eyes a workout with the following exercises

Eye yoga

You can do these in the office, on the bus, at home or wherever and whenever your eyes need a little exercise. Start by sitting with your back upright, body relaxed, head facing straight and hands on the knees.

Exercise 1

Up and down - Move your eyes upwards and then downwards, as far as you can. Repeat four times. End this exercise by blinking quickly a few times to relax the eyes muscles.

Exercise 2

Side to side - Raise your finger or hold a pencil at eye level as a target to focus your eyes on. Without straining, look to

the right at your finger or pencil, then look to the left. Repeat four times and then blink several times and close your eyes to give them a short rest.

Exercise 3

Diagonal - Choose a point you can see from the right corner of your eyes when looking up and a point from the left corner of the eyes when looking down. Move your eyes diagonally from right to left. Repeat four times, followed by blinking a few times and closing the eyes.

Do the same exercise but look up at a point from the left corner first then down from the right corner.

Exercise 4

Contract and relax - Close your eyes as tightly as possible and squeeze them, which will contract the eye muscles. Count to three then quickly let go to relax the eye muscles. Blink the eyes a few times to complete this exercise.

Exercise 5

Eye cupping - Briskly rub your hands to warm your palms. Cover your eyes and sockets with the palms, fingers overlapping on the forehead. Keep the neck straight.

Hold this position for a minute while doing some deep breathing. This exercise helps soothe eye strain and tension.

It can be repeated many times a day. For a relaxing five to 10 minutes eye cupping, sit at a table and place your elbows on the table for support.

Optical arsenal

Skincare for the eye area has entered a new era with more products and technologies available to tackle multiple signs of ageing that can come earlier than you want them to.

And for fragile skin around the eyes, here are some new treatments to watch out for at cosmetics counters.

Fast facts

Signs of ageing like to attack the eye zone first because it's a delicate area. So we have to keep an eye on fine lines, dark circles, puffiness and under-eye bags before they add years to our pretty face.

- Skin around the eyes is roughly 10 times thinner than the skin on the rest of the face. Therefore it is prone to early damage compared to other parts.

- The skin here also has fewer oil glands so it lacks the natural surface lubricant present on other parts of the face.
- As women age and produce less oestrogen, skin loses its ability to retain water and becomes even drier, thinner and less firm.
- Factors like sun exposure, pollution, smoking, stress, fatigue, squinting and even blinking can speed up signs of ageing around the eyes.
- Slow blood flow and a build up of lymphatic fluid can cause swelling and make the eye area puffy.