Welcome to Healthy Vision. This is your host, Dr. Edward Kondrot, and I’m here to help you conquer your vision loss. Today we’re going to be talking about how to improve your vision and be able to pass your driver’s test. What steps can you take to immediately improve your vision and pass that vision test?

I find that one of the greatest fears that a senior has is to lose his wheels and not be able to drive, because we know that driving represents independence. So you get that letter from the Department of Motor Vehicles and you have two weeks to prepare for your vision test. It may be a little shaky. You feel that your vision has declined and you’re worried that you might not pass. What can you do?

**FIND OUT YOUR LEVEL OF VISION**

I think the first step to do when you get that letter from the DMV and you’re not sure what your vision is, is you need to have a good eye exam and possibly change and update your glasses if necessary to get the best possible correction. You need to know your level of vision and what is required to pass the vision test.

There’s an excellent website that you can go to to find out the vision requirement for your particular state. This is one of the most helpful links I have found. The website is [www.MDSupport.org](http://www.MDSupport.org). Just go to their Library section and you can find Driving Requirements. Just hit that link to go to your particular state.

Let’s take Arizona for example. Arizona states the following:
Persons with binocular vision and with corrected visual acuity of 20/50 or 20/60 in both eyes together are restricted to daylight driving only.

In the state of Arizona you need to have 20/40 vision to drive at night, but let’s assume that we’re just going to be working on getting the proper vision so you can pass that test and have your license, even if it’s restricted. So you need to know what your level of vision is.

Let’s assume that your level of vision is less than that. What steps can you take to improve your vision and your acuity to give you a much better chance to pass your vision test?

The first thing that I advise patients to do is to have some basic lifestyle changes. You know the visual systems in your eyes are very sensitive to toxins. One naturopathic doctor described this using the analogy of a rain barrel. When we’re born, we’re born with a rain barrel that’s empty, and as we live our life we accumulate toxins. Once that rain barrel becomes full and overflows with toxins, then we have some type of disease, and this often leads to visual loss and eye disease.

So it’s very simple, two things we can do:

1. Prevent more toxins going into our body
2. Eliminate the toxins that we have

STEP ONE

I can’t emphasize this enough, that many times by eliminating the toxins and changing your diet, your visual acuity will change. As we get older our vision system is sensitive to these toxins. Anything we can do, any step in that direction will help.
So what are we going to do with our diet? What changes are we going to make? I’m a big advocate of eating raw, living, organic food. We always suggest that 70% of your diet should be raw organic food.

Why is this? We know that organic food has a greater nutritional value and much lower levels of harmful toxic minerals. These toxins are interfering with your vision. The best step you can do is begin eating organic.

Now why the raw or living food? Once the food is heated, cooked, or steamed, it loses a lot of its nutritional value. Also it’s interesting, one of the biggest problems we have as we get older is our digestion and absorption changes, so the food that you do eat is not absorbed into your body.

The best way to help increase this absorption is with digestive enzymes, and the raw living foods have much more in the way of digestive enzymes to help that food get into your body.

For goodness sake, don’t use the microwave. The microwave will completely destroy all the nutritional value of your food, and at the same time produce dangerous chemicals in your food, carcinogens, which can cause cancer and are extremely toxic to your eyes, your retina, and optic nerve.

The second step you should do in terms of your diet is you should also avoid all genetically-modified organism (GMO) food. These foods are also neurotoxic and will adversely affect your vision. There have been many animal studies that have shown that genetically-modified foods are neurotoxic. They do cause problems in the neurological system and also your eye.

Also you should avoid corn and corn products. Why? 90% of corn is genetically-modified, and about 100% of all corn has a small amount of a neurotoxin called Fumonisin. Fumonisin is extremely neurotoxic. Of course small amounts are not going to cause any harm in your body, but remember, you’re not 20 years old and your
rain barrel is not empty. Your rain barrel is full, so even the smallest amount of toxins can cause problems with your vision.

There’s another problem with corn, and that is the high fructose corn syrup. Unfortunately, the #1 sweetener in our country is high-fructose corn syrup. You need to avoid the high-fructose corn syrup, and there’s three reasons for this:

1. It’s made from genetically-modified organisms

2. It also has high levels of mercury due to the manufacturing process

3. It’s not really a true food source. It’s shunted more towards fat metabolism, and it also puts a stress on the pancreas. Some alternative doctors feel that this is a reason why there’s an increase incidence of obesity and why there’s an increased incidence of diabetes.

So remember, you can’t go wrong with eating 70% organic living food. You need to make that step.

STEP TWO

The second step is proper hydration. Remember we talked about the rain barrel. Well, the rain barrel is full of toxins and 1) we don’t want to put more toxins in that rain barrel, and 2) we want to drink plenty of water and be properly hydrated to remove some of those toxins from our body. Proper hydration is probably the best way to do this.

The problem is where are we going to get good water? We know that we probably should not drink tap water, because they have a lot of toxins, chlorine, and heavy metals that are going to be detrimental to our health.

Proper hydration is essential for vision function, and it’s essential to detoxify your body. Unfortunately, many of us are walking around
in a dehydrated state. Men have prostate problems and they’re drinking less water. Women have weak bladders and they’re drinking less water. We’re becoming dehydrated, and many metabolic functions are not working properly in the eye and we can’t eliminate toxins.

Dr. Batmanghelidj, a Persian physician, wrote a book called Our Bodies’ Many Cries for Water. He feels that the majority of cases of chronic disease are due to dehydration. Just by drinking more water we could eliminate those toxins, improve our health, and improve our vision.

The general rule is that you should be drinking at least half of your body weight in ounces of water. So if you weigh 150 pounds, you need to drink 75 ounces of water. Remember, that’s half of your body weight in ounces of water, not half your body weight in pounds. That would be a tough one to do! And you must drink a good source of water. No tap water. Avoid water in plastic containers.

I feel that probably the best source of water is either reverse osmosis water or distilled water. Coffee, tea, and juice do not count towards half of your body weight in ounces of water. It must be pure water. This is essential to remove those toxins and improve your visual function.

STEP THREE

The third area – after we’ve changed our diet and shifted more towards organic and we’re properly hydrated – is balancing the autonomic nervous system. The longer I practice alternative medicine, the more I realize the importance of this. We need to balance the autonomic nervous system.

The autonomic nervous system has two parts: sympathetic and the parasympathetic. Unfortunately, most people are in the sympathetic state, or the “fight or flight.” The analogy is when the grizzly bear is
chasing you in the woods, certain physiological changes take place in your body. Your heart is racing, your pupils are dilating, blood pressure becomes elevated, your digestive processes slow, the ability of your body to heal also slows, and your vision decreases. Your peripheral vision can decrease and there can be visual distortion.

You need to balance that autonomic nervous system. You need to get out of the sympathetic state, the flight or fight, so how do you get out of that sympathetic state?

There are many things you can do:

- Positive affirmations
- Meditation
- Prayer
- Deep breathing

I’ll go over some of these exercises on how you can relax your body a little later on in this radio show, but for now I want to talk about another thing that has shown to be very important for improving your vision, and that is sleeping in a totally dark room.

There was an article published in the Chinese literature called “Resetting the Pineal Clock.” This article proposed that a decrease in melatonin in the elderly may be an important factor in retinal pigment epithelial dysfunction, which reduces the central vision and can cause macular degeneration.

100 patients were given 3 mg of melatonin at night for three months. In addition, the patients were required to sleep in a totally dark room. Even the illumination of an alarm clock hitting your skin can cause changes in the pineal, so the key was a totally dark room.

After six months of treatment the majority of these patients had an improvement of their vision, simply by taking this simple step – 3 mg of melatonin and sleeping in a totally dark room. Remember, the room needs to be totally dark. Even the illumination of the alarm
clock hitting your skin can be enough to make changes in the pineal gland.

Also, Dr. Ott, who is a light researcher, studied the effects of ultraviolet light. In particular, he did a study at the Wills Eye Hospital looking at ultraviolet light and how it affected the retinal pigment epithelium. The retinal pigment epithelium is a crucial part of the retina. Its healthy function is responsible for good vision.

He discovered that the retinal pigment epithelium would not divide unless there were low levels of ultraviolet light, so low levels of ultraviolet light seem to be essential for proper functioning of the retina pigment epithelium.

Now, this goes against a lot of current scientific thinking that all ultraviolet light is harmful to the eye, but I’m making the statement that low amounts of ultraviolet light are essential for the health of the eye.

We’re hearing a lot now about vitamin D. Vitamin D is essential for our health. Many people have low levels of vitamin D. Vitamin D should be tested and everyone should be taking a vitamin D supplement, but probably the best way to get adequate levels of vitamin D in your body is exposure to sunlight, so low levels may be essential.

My suggestion is to try to spend 30 minutes to an hour a day outdoors with exposure to sunlight. Many alternative doctors would say remove your sunglasses, eyeglasses, and contact lenses, because the eyeglasses and contact lenses can prevent the absorption of the ultraviolet.

Now, of course don’t look directly at the sun, but just absorb the reflected light from the sun into your eyes. Even on a cloudy day there will be some benefits.

I have to caution you, if you had cataract surgery and if you lost the protective benefit of the human lens after cataract surgery, then you
need to reduce the exposure of ultraviolet light and possibly protect your eyes with sunglasses.

There was a turn-of-the-century ophthalmologist by the name of Dr. William Bates, and Dr. Bates felt that all eye disease and reduction in vision was due to stress around the eye.

When I was in my residency program in ophthalmology, we made fun of Dr. Bates. We thought that he was a quack and really wasn’t practicing traditional ophthalmology.

It wasn’t until I came across a book called The Art of Seeing, written by Aldous Huxley, the famous science fiction writer who wrote Brave New World and Doors of Perception, that I discovered that Huxley had extremely poor vision and he traveled all over the country seeking help. No one could help him with his vision until he began to do these Bates exercises. Once he started to do these Bates exercises, his vision improved.

Dr. Bates felt that all eye disease was related to stress around the eye, and simply by reducing stress you could dramatically improve your vision. He developed several exercises to help improve your vision. What I have done is incorporated some of these exercises to help you improve your vision.

EXERCISES TO IMPROVE YOUR VISION

Now we’re going to be talking about some exercises that I think can be beneficial and helpful. You’ve taken the steps, you’ve changed your diet, you’re eating more organic foods, you’re properly hydrated and you’re doing some techniques to balance your autonomic nervous system and getting yourself out of that sympathetic state.

SNELLEN EYE CHART EXERCISES
The first exercise I call the Snellen eye chart exercise. The Snellen eye chart is the common eye chart that you see in an eye doctor’s office, the one that has the big E on the top, and as you progress downward on the chart the letters get smaller and smaller.

On the left is an example of a Snellen acuity chart. The famous “E” chart that eye doctors have you read to check your acuity or ability to see smaller and smaller letters. Your goal is to establish the level (line) you are able to read comfortably and then find the line you need to read to pass your divers test!

The equipment that you need is you need some hooker tape to hang the chart, you need a comfortable chair, you need a 20’ measuring tape, and you also need some tape to mark the floor. You need to find out the vision requirement for your state. I already mentioned there’s a website called www.MDSupport.org. On that site you look up your particular state and find out the vision requirement.

In Arizona it states that, “Persons with binocular vision and with corrected visual acuity of 20/50 or 20/60 in both eyes together are restricted to daylight driving only,” so this is going to be our goal, 20/60.

So you place the eye chart on the wall with a room that has good lighting. Natural lighting is preferred. Find the line that you need to
pass your test. On the Snellen eye chart you will be able to see on one side of the chart 20/100, 20/80, 20/60, 20/40, etc, so find the line that you need.

Look at a enlarged view of the eye chart on the left. To the left of the L you see the level of vision 20/50, next to the P 20/40, next to the E 20/30 and then next to the F 20/25. Immediately you notice that the top number stays the same “20” this is the distance from the eye chart. The numbers on the bottom become smaller along with the letters also getting smaller. The smaller the line you can read it will correspond to a smaller bottom number on the 20/xxx.

If you have trouble finding a Snellen eye chart, please give our office a call at 1–800–430–9328.

So you have the eye chart hanging on the wall, and what you need to do is you need to back up, looking at the line you need to read, the 20/60 line, and keep on backing up until that lines becomes blurred and until you no longer see it. (Since on this eye chart there is NO 20/60 line we will use the 20/50 line.)
The ideal measurement would be being able to read that line at 20’. That is 20/60 vision. Let’s assume that you start to back up and the vision becomes blurred at 5’ or even 10’. Mark the point on the floor where that line becomes blurred. That is going to be your baseline of starting.

What I want you to do is put the chair right by that line where the 20/50 line is blurred. Your goal then is you’re going to keep on backing up that chair until you get to 20’.

The problem is that most of us don’t have a room that’s 20’ long, so you’re going to have to do a little bit of math here. I want you to take a deep breath. This may seem like it’s a little confusing, but what you need to do is you can make some adjustments. If you don’t have a room that’s 20’, let’s use 10’.

Remember, 10’ is half the distance of the 20’, so you need to find a target that is one-half as small. It’s very simple. If the distance you are is one-half the distance, then the line has to be one-half as

20/30 is 1/2 the size of the 20/60 line

E at 20/30   E at 20/60

SO instead of using the 20/60 line at 20 feet in your room you can use the 20/30 line at 10 feet.

small, so you go to the 20/30 line. The 20/30 line at 10’ is equivalent to the 20/60 line at 20’.
I know this is probably confusing. You’re probably scratching your head, but go over the math again and maybe again and look at your eye chart for a comparison of the size. If you are still confused please call the office 800-430-9328.

Now, this is the part where you can begin your exercise. I want you to sit comfortably, look at that line, and I want you to rub the palm of your hands for a couple minutes, and then gently place the palms of your hands over your eyes. Breathe slowly with deep breaths, and develop an affirmation during this exercise. “My vision is getting better and better every day.”

Do this for a couple minutes. This is the classic Bates exercise called palming, and there’s two positive effects when you do this exercise.

1. First, our body has healing energy, and when you’re directing this healing energy from the palm of your hands into the eye, it should have a very positive effect.
2. You’re also doing deep slow breathing, and this helps relax the autonomic nervous system.

After about five or 10 minutes of doing this, remove your hands and take a deep breath and look at the eye chart. Are the letters clear? Great! If they are, you’re well on your way to pass your driver’s test.

I want you to do this every day. If you have time, try to do it twice a day. Remember these simple steps:

1. Find the spot where the letters are blurred.
2. Place your chair at that spot.
3. Make a note of the distance that you are. In this particular case, the goal is to read those letters from 10’.
4. Then place the palms of your hands over your eyes, breathing deeply with your positive affirmation.
5. After 5–10 minutes of doing this, remove your hands, take a deep breath, and then read the eye chart.

An additional point to improve your vision is to blink. Blink lightly and frequently, but don’t squeeze your eyes. The problem that many of us have when we’re trying to read letters is that we strain the eyes. We don’t blink. We stare at those letters.

Staring at the letters can cause tension around the eye, and I already mentioned that tension reduces vision. You need to blink. By blinking your eyes you lubricate the eyes, and this can dramatically improve your visual acuity.

There’s another point that can help you improve your vision, and that’s learn to scan. If you have macular degeneration or some other visual problem, the center part of your vision may be blurred, but it’s very simple to just gently turn your head ever so slightly to the left and right as you read the letters. You want to try to find that sweet spot in your vision, that spot where you have the best acuity.
I’ve observed many people struggling reading the eye chart. They can read the letters, but they’re turning their head left and right. They’re twisting, they’re contorting themselves, but they finally can read the letters. What you want to be able to do is be able to scan very, very gently to be able to pick up and use some of that peripheral vision to see the letters.

Once again, this is called the Snellen eye exercise.

1. Obtain a Snellen visual acuity chart.
2. Find the letters on the line that you need to read to pass your vision test.
3. Obtain the proper distance in order to read that line, and that is going to be your goal.
4. Then find the point at which those letters blur. That’s your starting point.
5. Begin to do the eye exercises: palming, deep breathing, positive affirmation
6. After 5–10 minutes, then remove your hands, take a deep breath, blink, and I think you’ll be surprised that the letters are a little clearer.

I think you’re well on the way to pass the vision part of your driver’s test!!!

**KONDROT CRAYON EXERCISE**

Now you need to work on the peripheral vision. Every state has a different level of peripheral vision. Peripheral is your side vision, and of course this is important for driving. You can pick up objects on the side.

Typically, patients with macular degeneration don’t have problems with their peripheral vision. It’s more of a problem if you’ve had a stroke, glaucoma, and maybe some other neurological problems,
but one thing that I am certain of, if your autonomic nervous system is not balanced, if you’re in that sympathetic state, you will have a peripheral contraction of your vision.

Your visual field will be smaller, so I can’t emphasize enough balancing the emotional body, getting out of the sympathetic state, deep breathing, meditation, and relaxation exercises. That in many cases will expand your peripheral vision.

Let’s talk about exercise #2, which is a fun exercise. This is called improving your peripheral vision. The equipment you need is a blank wall (that should not be any problem), a comfortable chair (you’ve already got the chair from exercise #1), and you need to get a fixation target on the wall. This can be a piece of tape or a thumbtack.

Place this on the wall at eye level while you are seated (I would recommend sitting about two to three feet from the wall), and you need a box of jumbo crayons. I would recommend a small box. I think they have 8–10 jumbo crayons, and I’ll explain to you why these jumbo crayons. No, you’re not going to be marking up the wall, so don’t worry about destroying your wall.

Now we are going to have some fun with Crayons!!
This is how you do the exercise. I want you to keep both eyes open. Place the crayon on your right side. Randomly pick up a crayon. Do not look at the color. Your eyes are focused on the center tape or thumbtack on the wall. Gradually move that crayon in from the right outside of your peripheral vision, and keep on looking at the center.

Moving a colored crayon from the right toward the center and then taking another crayon from above to the center

Make a note when you begin to see motion, and then also make a note when you can tell the color of the crayon. Remember, motion then color. Do not look at the crayon, but stay focused on the center mark.
Grab another color, and this time move from the bottom upward. Once again, wait until you can identify the motion and then the color.

Then take another one and move from the outside left to the center. Motion and then color.

Then lastly take another crayon and move from the top downward.

I kind of like this test, because it’s a little tricky. Most people when they do the visual field test, they’re looking off to one side very quickly and they’re cheating. I want you to be a good patient and look straight ahead at that object.

When you first perceive the color, this kind of stimulates the peripheral vision. Some of you may notice that certain colors you’re much better with than others. Make a note of it. This is good, because as you do this exercise you’re going to find your peripheral vision improve.

Now I want you to close your eyes and do some palming and deep breathing for about 10 minutes. Remember the steps that we talked about in palming. First rub your hands together to generate some heat. Then gently place your palm over your eye – not the fingertips, your palm – over your closed eye. Take some nice deep breaths, say your positive affirmation, then after 5–10 minutes of doing deep breathing and the palming, uncover your eyes, take a deep breath, blink a few times, and repeat the peripheral field exercise.

Get the box of crayons, randomly grab one, move from the right outside inward, the bottom upward, left outside inward, and each time you move the crayon it’s going to be a different crayon and a different color.

How much has your field expanded? Great! I think you’ll notice that your visual field has expanded. You know the old adage, “If you don’t use it, you’ll lose it.” This test is stimulating your peripheral
vision. It’s stimulating it by different colors, it’s stimulating it by perceiving motion, and it’s also stimulating it by the palming.

I’d like to make another comment about palming. As I mentioned earlier, when I first heard about palming I was a little skeptical until I read the book, The Art of Seeing. This book was written by Aldous Huxley, the great science fiction writer, Oxford-trained, a brilliant man, and it was palming that restored his vision.

This book is a dedication to Dr. William Bates. It’s called The Art of Seeing, if you’re interested in picking up a short book which goes over this particular vision therapy. It’s really a great find and it’s an easy read. The Art of Seeing by Aldous Huxley.

I’d like to review the things that we talked about.

The first step when you get that letter from the DMV and you’re told you have to show up in two weeks to take your vision test is you need a good eye exam. So call up your local eye doctor and see if you need your glasses updated. This is the first step.

Also, know your level of vision. You need to know what is required to pass the vision test in your state. A great website is www.MDSupport.org. In Arizona you’re required to have 20/60 vision in both eyes for restricted daylight driving only. Once you identify that, then you know how much work you have to do.

The first step is your diet. Change your diet to more raw, living, organic foods. Why? The organic food is healthier for you, there’s better nutrients, and there’s much less toxins in organic food. Avoid genetically-modified foods. These foods are neurotoxic and can adversely affect your vision.

Also avoid corn and corn fructose. Why? Because corn is genetically modified. Corn fructose has high levels of mercury due to its manufacturing, and corn fructose is not a true food source.
Second is proper hydration, one-half of your body weight in ounces of water. Drink plenty of water. It helps remove toxins from your body. That will help improve your vision.

Third, and probably the most important, is balancing that autonomic nervous system, relaxing your body and getting out of the sympathetic state. Catch yourself when you’re in the sympathetic state. Do some deep breathing, positive affirmations, and some of the eye exercises that I talked about, like the Bates method.

Sleep in a totally dark room. Take 3 mg of melatonin at night. The study done out of China, “Resetting the Pineal Clock,” showed that many patients with macular degeneration are deficient in melanin, and this can adversely affect the retinal pigment epithelium. By sleeping in a totally dark room and taking some melatonin before you go to bed, this can be a big asset in terms of stimulating the pineal to adequately produce that melanin that your eye needs.

Also, at least one hour of sunlight in the afternoon. Dr. John Ott’s research with Dr. Leopold at the Wills Eye Hospital demonstrated that the retinal pigment epithelium in rabbits would not divide unless they were exposed to low levels of ultraviolet light. This means that ultraviolet light is necessary for our ocular health. Severely depriving yourself of ultraviolet light might be a contributing cause of macular degeneration.

Lastly we went over a couple of exercises. Exercise #1 is the Snellen eye chart exercise, and exercise #2 is improving your peripheral vision. These are great exercises to help improve your vision and give you confidence.

If you’d like additional information on this program to improve your vision and pass your driver’s test, please give me a call at 1–800–430–9328.
Improve your vision and pass your driver’s license!

Dr. Kondrot’s special program has been designed to improve your vision quickly. It includes both of his best-selling books, four CDs of the best of Healthy Vision, a Snellen acuity chart, and a special audio CD on the steps you need to take to improve your vision quickly and pass your driver’s test. A $120 value, yours for only $79.95.

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