

Bondi Eye Care Clinic Behavioural Optometrist Vision Therapy Myopia Prevention

Vision Therapy: Taking a New Look at Life, Learning, and Functioning

Vision Therapy: Taking a New Look at Life, Learning, and Functioning According to Australian behavioural optometrists Gary Rodney and Jacqueline Gattegno, vision therapy is not a magic wand or a basic set of eye exercises which provides an instant cure for vision disorders. Instead, they say, it's a controlled and effective vision training programme which looks beyond eyesight and into how well (or badly) the information is gathered by the eyes and then secondly how well it is processed by the brain and how to correct any malfunctions in that system.

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How Vision Therapy Works Rodney, a fellow of the International Academy of Orthokeratology and Myopia Control (FIAOMC), says the therapy, sometimes called the "physiotherapy" of vision, is aimed at correcting any hidden (and often unnoticed) glitches in the visual function system and visual processing system which can impact negatively on how people understand, and perform in, the world around them.

And it's not just a few that face living with the consequences. Statistics suggest that a minimum of 25% of young children are likely to have to deal with undetected and often misdiagnosed vision problems during their first years of schooling.

Tracking Down the Dysfunctions According to Rodney, these dysfunctions can't be identified by taking a standard eye test but can be detected by testing functional and perceptual visual skills and assessing behavioural abnormalities which seem to be out of sync with personality types. He says any irregularities in these can lead to difficulties in learning; reading; sports; concentrating or paying attention. They may also impact on motor-skills and physical development, bring about perceptual and functional confusion regarding a person's place in the world, and skew their understanding of what's going on around them.

He says that often these problems are brought about by eye conditions like crossed or lazy eyes; poor eye-teaming and/or eye-tracking skills; depth perception problems; and ocular muscle or focusing dysfunctions, to name just a few.

With such a wide variety of causes, therapy programmes cannot be standardised but instead have to be custom-designed to meet each person's individual needs. And as the programme is not (nor meant to be) a quick fix, it may involve multiple consultations, special spectacles, regular training using software in the clinic, and a fair amount of time spent at home exercising eye muscles, and learning to identify visual information more accurately relative to age norms.

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Results Shown in Case Studies Rodney says the outcomes revealed in case studies which have tracked training programmes carried out at his Smart Vision Optometry clinics, show noticeable positive changes in perceptive vision, functioning, and performance.

One such case study records how an 8-year-old girl with cerebral palsy who had spent most of her life in a wheelchair, was finally able to stand up straight and unassisted for the first time after completing two of the three blocks of her therapy programme. She had also caught up with her classmates from being two years behind in reading, was comfortably handling maths and starting to take part in class discussions. The next step, Rodney said, is for her to walk unaided, and he believes that moment won't be far off as her eye-tracking and depth perception problems lessens still further and her understanding of the concepts of space improves.

Another case study tells the story of three siblings, all of which underwent vision therapy some years apart to help treat different problems. The oldest was battling with reading; the middle child, a girl, suffered debilitating headaches; and the youngest finally admitted to his teacher that he couldn't read the writing on the blackboard in class. In all three cases, the therapy had positive outcomes.

For more information on vision therapy and how it works, visit the Smart Vision website: Optometrists Sydney: Optometry Services For Children and Adults | Smart Vision; for specific information about Myopia treatment and prevention visit Myopia Prevention: Solutions, Control And Treatment In Sydney; and for detailed information about Myopia Treatment visit Orthokeratology In Sydney: The Non Surgical Alternative.

To book an appointment for a thorough eye check-up, click here or Call the Bondi clinic on (02) 9365 5047 or the Mosman clinic on (02) 9969 1600.

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