

## Bates Fundamentals & Procedures

### Quotes are from Bates' *Better Eyesight Magazine*

**Better Eyesight**  
A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE PREVENTION  
AND CURE OF IMPERFECT SIGHT WITHOUT GLASSES  
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William Horatio Bates, M.D. (1860-1931)

without glasses is to secure rest or relaxation, of the mind first and then of the eyes. Rest always improves the vision. Straining to effort always lowers it. All errors of refraction and many other eye troubles are cured by rest; but there are many ways of obtaining this rest, and all patients cannot do it in the same way. Sometimes after a long succession of patients is helped by the same particular method, will come someone one who does not respond to it at all."

#### Practicing:

**Bates:** "How much time should one devote to practicing the methods described above? The answer is—ALL THE TIME. One can practice properly for ten minutes and be comfortable. That does not mean that all the rest of the day one can strain and tear one's eyes all to pieces without paying the penalty for breaking the law. If you are under treatment for imperfect sight work to keep in mind all day long from the time you wake up in the morning until you go to bed at night the feeling of comfort, of rest, of relaxation, incessantly. It is a great deal better to do that than to feel under a strain and be uncomfortable all day long. One should secure relaxation or rest until one is perfectly comfortable and continue feeling comfortable as long as one is awake."

"So many people complain that they do not have time to practice and that they have fatigue. So they are less inclined to practice central fixation, the swing, palming, sunning and imagining and remembering perfect sight and other things that relieve or prevent fatigue. It should be emphasized that one has just as much time to do right as to do wrong and it certainly is the wrong thing to go around most of the time suffering from fatigue."

#### Shifting and Swinging:

**How fast to swing?** Bates'- "The ease and speed of swinging can be aided by moving one's thumbnail back and forth across a nail of a finger on that hand. Practice moving the thumb slowly, easily and automatically and allow the eyes to flow with the movement of the thumb."

**Bates':** "The eye with imperfect sight habitually stares and tries to freeze its aim at the point of fixation. The normal eye does not stare as long as it has normal sight. Eyes with normal vision never regards a point for more than a fraction of a second. Instead, the normal eye shifts constantly to aim at one detail and then to another and another. Normally we aren't aware of this and we don't notice the movement of a letter or other object as it moves across the retina. When the normal eye has normal sight, the small letters of the Snellen Test Card are imagined to be moving from side to side, slowly and continuously, across the width of the letter." Swinging is the practice of learning to see this movement."

"In the treatment of imperfect sight these fundamental principles are to a great extent interdependent. They cannot be separated as in what follows here. It is impossible, for instance, to produce the illusion of a swing unless one possesses a certain degree of central fixation. That is, one must be able to shift from one point to another and see the point shifted from less distinctly than the one directly presently regarded. Successful palming is impossible without mental shifting and swinging, and the use of the memory and imagination."

"The object of all the methods used in the treatment of imperfect sight

#### GET A GOOD START WITH SOME NEW RESOLUTIONS

Eyes must have systematic relief.

Resolve that:

1. I will not overwork my eyes by staring.
2. I will relieve them from duty by blinking constantly.
3. I will Palm frequently. This is relaxation to the eyes.
4. I will Swing and see objects moving.
5. I will Read small print as much as possible.

Let these five rules govern your eye action. They aren't difficult and become a good habit with practice. Your eyes will appreciate it, and perfect sight is worth "resolving" for.

"This habit of staring can be corrected by consciously imitating the unconscious shifting of the normal eye. It is a slow, short, easy swing moving about as fast as one would count orally. The width of the swing is not more than the width of the letter, and it is remembered or imagined as easily as it is possible without any effort whatsoever. With practice one learns to swing the tiniest objects over the shortest distance, even a period can be seen to swing with a back and forth opposite movement."

"As a rule, mental shifting and swinging are easier at first than visual. Persons with imperfect sight have become able to imagine this illusion by alternately remembering or imagining the small letter moving from side to side continuously. With their eyes open they may be able to do it for a moment or flash it, at first occasionally, and later more continuously, until they are cured. When visual or mental swinging is successful, everything one thinks of appears to have a slight swing. "

**Bates Memory:** "When the sight is normal the mind is always perfectly at rest, and when the memory is perfect the mind is also at rest. Therefore, it is possible to improve the sight by the use of the memory. Anything the patient finds agreeable to remember is a rest to the mind. The most favorable condition for the exercise of the memory is, usually, with the eyes closed and covered, but by practice it becomes possible to remember equally well with the eyes open. When patients are able, with their eyes closed and covered, to remember perfectly a letter of diamond type, it appears, just as it would if they were looking at it with the bodily eyes, to have a slight movement, while the openings inside the letter appear whiter than the rest of the background. "

**Bates Imagination:** "Vision is largely a matter of imagination and memory. Imagination is closely allied to memory, for we can imagine only as well as we remember, and in the treatment of imperfect sight the two can scarcely be separated. The cultivation of these faculties not only improves the interpretation of the pictures on the retina but improves the retinal images themselves".

"Imagination is very efficient in improving the vision. When some patients look at a blurred letter that they already know, they can close their eyes and imagine it better than they see it with their eyes open. By alternately imagining a known letter with the eyes closed and with the eyes opened, not only does the imagination of the letter often improve to normal with eyes open but the letter itself look clear when they look at it. The patient who is able to do this is also able to demonstrate that when the imagination is improved for one known letter the vision for unknown letters of the same size also improves. By imagining the first letter of a line perfectly the patient can tell the second letter and other letters which are not known."

**BATES QUESTION**—*I still cannot visualize "black" what else can I use as a substitute? W. H. B.*  
**ANSWER**—*Don't try to see anything. If it is an effort to visualize black, think of something that is pleasant, for instance, a field of daisies, a sun-set, etc. The result will be just as beneficial.*

**QUESTION**—*To palm successfully is it necessary to remember black or try to see black?*  
**ANSWER**—*No. When one palms successfully the eyes and mind are relaxed and black is usually seen, but any effort to see black is a strain which always fails.*

**Bates Flashing:** It is the unconscious habit of making-an-effort to see that strains the eyes and spoils the sight. Some persons with imperfect sight can be taught to improve their vision by learning to look at a letter or object for a fraction of a second without effort using the following practice: The eyes are rested for a few minutes by closing or palming. The patient is reminded to not try hard to see and not to worry if they fail to see it. Then they are directed to open their eyes, look at a letter on the test card for a fraction of a second and quickly close the eyes again before the habit of strain can reassert itself. The eyes are closed or palmed again to rest them, and the process repeated again and again. I have called this procedure *flashing*, and through this practice permanent relaxation is sometimes very quickly obtained. As the sight improves learn to quickly shift to something else. Dodge your improved vision.

**Bates Blinking and Dodging:** “Do not stare. Dodge it. Whenever your sight improves, shift quickly to something else. Dodge your improved vision. Whenever you see things imperfectly shift your eyes quickly to something else. Dodge your imperfect sight. To stare always lowers the vision. Closing the eyes effectually dodges perfect or imperfect sight. Usually unconsciously the normal eye closes and opens quite frequently and at irregular intervals and for very short spaces of time. This is called Blinking and it is only another name for dodging. Dodging what? Dodging the tendency to look steadily at things all the time. All the methods which have been recommended for the improvement of the vision, central fixation, palming, swinging, blinking can all be grouped under the one word—dodging.

**Bates Reading Familiar Letters:** “The eye always strains to see unfamiliar objects and is always relaxed to a greater or less degree by looking at familiar objects. Therefore, the reading every day of small familiar letters at the greatest distance at which they can be seen is a rest to the eye and is sufficient to cure children under twelve who have not worn glasses, as well as some older children, and adults with minor defects of vision. Reading the Snellen Test Card twice a day or oftener, with each eye separately without glasses, is a great help in improving the sight.”

## CENTRAL FIXATION

**Bates’:** “By central fixation is meant the ability to see one letter or one object regarded in such a way that all other letters or nearby details are seen worse in proportion as it is removed from the point of fixation. When the vision is imperfect, the eye tries to see all parts of the visual field equally well at one time. This is a great strain upon the eye and mind. Anything that rests the eyes tends to restore the normal power of central fixation. **Central fixation can also be gained by conscious practice**, and this is sometimes the quickest and easiest way to improve the sight. When the patient becomes conscious that he sees the centrally fixated details best, it becomes possible to work to reduce the size of centrally fixated area. Since small objects cannot be seen without central fixation, the reading of fine print, when it can be done, is one of the best of visual exercises, and the dimmer the light in which it can be read and the closer to the eye it can be held the better.”

**Bates’ Exercise to develop central fixation through imagination:** “The following method of using the imagination has produced quick results in many cases: The patient is asked to look at the **largest** letter on the test card at the near-point, and is usually able to observe that a small area, about a square inch, appears blacker than the rest, and that when the part of the letter seen worst is covered, part of the exposed area seems blacker than the remainder. When the part seen worst is again covered, the area of maximum blackness is still further reduced. When the part seen best has been reduced to about the size of a letter on the bottom line, the patient is asked to imagine that such a letter occupies this area and is blacker than the rest of the letter. Then he is asked to look at a letter on the bottom line and imagine that it is blacker than the largest letter. Many are able to do this, and at once become able to see the letters on the bottom line”

**Staring is the enemy.** Become aware of staring. Learn to catch yourself staring. It is a bad habit. Try *Blinking and Breathing* instead. Whenever you become aware of staring, contracting your muscles, and holding your breath, blink your eyes rapidly and take two big breaths.

## BLINKING AND BREATHING

**BLINKING** is a major tool for stopping yourself from staring. Blinking can be soft and rapid like a butterfly moves its wings. Butterfly blinking can be done while driving, reading, cooking, sports, movies or any activity because it doesn't interfere with what you are doing. It's especially helpful while doing Bates practices like sunning, swinging and working on the vision acuity chart. Rapid blinking lubricates and relaxes the eyes and seems to increase visual acuity at far or near distances. Blinking can also be slow and soft. Close your eyes when you member to be aware of straining or staring. You can do this for a full breath or several breaths or for just an exhale or inhale. Some people find that squeezing the eyes closed, then quickly opening and holding them open can clear their vision.

**Bates’:** “The simplest way to rest the eyes is to close them for a longer or shorter period and think about something agreeable. This is always the first thing that I tell patients to do.”

**BREATHING** - Slow, deep breathing reduces anxiety and calms racing mind. Several minutes of slow, deep breathing is the quickest way to reduce anxiety. Whenever you think about breathing, make a habit of taking 10 breaths – count: “1-2-3-4” for each inhale and for each exhale. If a 4-count is not comfortable, you can slow down or speed up the tempo or count to 5 or 3 to find what works best. After 20 or 30 breaths, you may find that your breathing wants to deepen and counting to 5 or 6 works better. Do this before starting any of the vision practices like palming, sunning, shifting, clearing print, before falling asleep, after waking up and just before engaging in any visually or mentally demanding task. It can also be helpful for calming anxiety or anger.

**Bates Breathing** – “Many patients with imperfect sight are benefited by breathing. One of the best methods is to separate the teeth while keeping the lips closed, breathe deeply as though one were yawning. When done properly one can feel the air cold as it passes through the nose and down the throat. This method of breathing secures a great amount of relaxation of the nose, throat, the body generally including the eyes and ears.”

**FINGER BREATHING TO INCREASE YOUR BREATHING SPAN** - It might help you to keep track of how many breaths you have taken by counting each breath on your fingers, one finger after the other. This makes it easier to keep breathing for 10 whole breaths. You can extend your breathing span by adding another count of 10-finger breaths, etc. If you are anxious or distracted, your attention might wander so you unconsciously stop breathing and hold your breath before counting all 10 fingers. If so, try reducing your goal to 5 or even just 3 finger breaths in order to succeed. Then repeat 3 again and again until after a few minutes, you'll be more centered, less anxious and able to succeed at mindful counting for 10 and even 100 breaths by counting ten groups of ten.

**REMEMBERING TO BE AWARE:** Once you are aware of what it feels like to be holding your breath, cut out a "BLINK AND BREATHE NOW" sign for your dashboard, desk, refrigerator, wristwatch, book-mark, etc. Make a point of breathing and blinking when you prepare a salad, pay your bills, read your email.

**Steps to replacing a bad habit with a better one**

1. Become aware that something needs changing.
2. Remember to be aware.
3. Prolong your attention span for the awareness.
4. Maintain awareness in demanding situations.

**PASTE THESE SIGNS AROUND YOUR ENVIRONMENT TO REMIND YOURSELF**

**Blink and Breathe Now!**

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**Blink and Breathe Now!**

**Blink  
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## BREATHING GAMES

**EXTEND YOUR ATTENTION SPAN FOR BREATHING** by making up breathing games whenever you can remember to. Choose some future event 30 or 40 seconds away. For example, while walking or driving, look ahead for a goal such as a street sign or parked car a little way ahead of you and try to blink and breathe until you pass it; or estimate how many breaths it will take until you reach the car and then count them to see how accurate you were; or estimate where you will be after 20 breaths of walking, or driving. You can invent and practice breathing games driving, writing/typing (breathe until the end of a word or sentence), listening to the radio (breathe until the commercial is over), watching movies (breathe until the camera angle changes or an actor stops talking), in restaurants (until that waiter passes a certain table), cooking (breathe until you finish slicing a tomato), talking on the phone (breathe until the other person finishes talking), texting, etc. At first may take a so much attention that you can't pay attention to the movie or conversation but eventually sustained breathing becomes easier and more automatic as you practice to be able to multitask on more complex tasks. Therefore, start with easy activities like walking or driving. And don't frustrate yourself by choosing impossible goals that are too far in the future. Even a one-minute goal might be too long. This brings the practice of better vision into your daily life activities. It takes no extra time, just remembering to be aware, to sustain the awareness and to replace some bad habits of seeing that created your eye condition with habits of that promote wellness.

## PALMING

Palming is a simple and natural act with profound effects. Palming calms the mind, reduces anxiety, relaxes eyestrain and improves vision. All you have to do is sit down, lean forward and rest your elbows on your desk or table. As you lean over, bend from your pelvis and move to lengthen your back so that your neck and spine are extended, not flexed back and allow your shoulders feel broad. You can also sit with your elbows propped on your knees, a chair back or cushion or you can rest on your back or side with pillows between your elbows. Find your favorite position to feel comfortable.

Then close your eyes and cover them with the palms of your hands. It's the palms (concave part), not the fingers or heel of your hands, that cover the eye sockets. Your fingers can overlap above your nose with your right or left hand's fingers covering the other hand's fingers. Feel your eyes give up the tension of trying to see. Keep as much light from reaching your eyes as you can but don't worry if a little bit sneaks through. Think about calming your mind, relaxing your muscles, and breathe continually. Relax your hands, imagine that you can feel them pulling energy out from your eyes. Palming sessions can last for just ten breaths or for several hundred. The most important thing is to keep breathing. Many people can see more clearly after a just few minutes of palming.

Palm many times each day. Palm in the morning to start the day with relaxation and awareness. Do it at night just before bedtime for a more relaxed and healing sleep. Palm before any visually demanding task and palm when you feel the need to relax your eyes or calm yourself. Make it a life-long habit. Two things happen after several weeks of palming. As you get used to palming, the relaxation becomes more profound and you feel it come on more quickly. After a while you will have memorized the relaxed feeling of palming. Now you have something to compare with the unconscious ocular tension that feels normal but locks your mind and eyes in an unhealthy posture.

**Palming from Bates**— “A still greater degree of rest can be obtained by closing and covering the eyes so as to exclude all the light. The mere exclusion of the impressions of sight is often sufficient to produce a large measure of relaxation for many patients but for others the strain is increased. Resting the eyes by closing and covering them with the palms of the hands improves the sight of most people. Some persons have obtained a cure by palming only. When the vision is not improved by palming do not practice it until you can learn how to palm properly. The mere covering and closing of the eyes is useless unless at the same time mental rest is obtained. **As a rule, successful palming involves the use of various other means of obtaining relaxation.** Patients are recommended to practice for the cure of their imperfect sight is to palm at least six times daily for five minutes or longer each time. The length of time necessary to palm to obtain maximum results varies with individuals. Most persons can obtain improvement in fifteen minutes while others require a longer time, a half hour, an hour or even

two or more hours of continuous palming to obtain any benefit. With improvement in the vision it usually follows that a shorter period of palming may obtain maximum results. “

## PALMING VISUALIZATION PRACTICES

These practices will make you more aware of your eyes and the difference between when they feel strained and not strained. When they feel strained is a message that you should stop what you are doing and close your eyes and breathe or palm (if the situation allows you to do this). As you practice palming and the various "Palming visualization exercises", you learn to be able to relax by just remembering what it feels like to do palming or by imagining the 'five finger exercise', the big squeeze or light touch. This allows you reduce the strain without stopping what you are doing (driving, typing, reading, talking, washing dishes, cutting vegetables, etc.) and without anyone nearby able to tell that you are practicing eye improvement.

**THE LIGHT TOUCH:** Vary how hard your hands press on your face as you palm. There is a **special feeling of spreading relaxation** that comes at a certain point as you reduce the pressure. First push firmly on your face and then ease the pressure little by little. Continue for several minutes making the touch lighter and lighter. Imagine feeling the bones around your eyes expand as if to keep in contact with your hands. Imagine your hands getting larger, fingers longer and feel your facial bones expand to keep contact. Imagine your eye sockets stretching. Let your eyeballs grow to fill in the space. **Feel as if your hands are drawing a flow of energy out of your eyes.** Continue for several minutes. When you get good at it, you will be able to relax yourself at any time by recalling the feeling of this special touch.

**THE BIG SQUEEZE:** The basic procedure is as follows. Palm, breathe, and tighten your eyelid muscles to squeeze both eyes shut. At the same time, relax all facial muscles except those needed for the squeeze. Release your forehead, between your eye brows, your mouth, lips, ears and jaws. Concentrate on isolating the squeeze muscles from the rest. **Pay attention to your breathing.** Relax other places in your body as much as you can while still squeezing and breathing. Throat, back of neck, shoulders, hands, arms, stomach, pelvis, knees, feet, or toes don't have to be tight in order to squeeze your eyes closed.

Start by squeezing a full, hundred percent. Hold it and then relax as described above. After several breaths, squeeze again, but this time use only half the force of the first effort. Hold, breathe, isolate, and again release after several good breaths. Keep breathing and continue the same process but squeezing only one-fourth of the original. Repeat again at one-eighth power and feel for the spread of relaxation after releasing the squeeze.

The next step is to go through the whole procedure again **in your imagination**. Imagine squeezing a hundred percent. Isolate the feeling by imagining that only the necessary muscles are contracting. Relax the others in your face and body. After several breaths release the imaginary squeeze and feel your mind and body let go. Continue through the rest of the process reducing the imagined squeeze at each step.

Practice the final 1/8 imaginary squeeze several times. The goal for this is two-fold: to become sensitive to subtle tension in and around your eyes and to learn the action of willing your eyes to relax. Remember to bring this new skill into awareness throughout the day.

**FIVE FINGERS EXERCISE:** Willing your body to relax is not easy. If you concentrate on relaxing the tension in one part, other parts can tense up. You often find yourself chasing tension around your body, relaxing one part while being unconscious of tightness elsewhere. In this exercise the fingers provide an organized map for systematically relaxing the whole body. **Each finger represent a different section of the body** and the procedure is to relax each finger and at the same time the matching body parts.

1. The **little fingers** cover the toes, feet, ankles, lower legs, knees, thighs, groin and pelvis.
2. The **ring fingers** cover the pelvis, lower back, abdomen, middle back, and chest up to the arm pits.
3. The **middle fingers** cover all the fingers, hands, wrists, forearms, elbows, upper arms, shoulders, back of neck and head, top of head and forehead.

4. The **index fingers** cover the throat, back of tongue, jaw, mouth and lips.

5. The **thumbs** cover in and around the eyes and the mind.

Palm, breathe, relax the pressure of your hands on your face, and think of relaxing your little finger. Imagine it getting longer and looser. At the same time, go through each part listed above for this finger. Put your mind on the finger and then on the leg and pelvis and then back and forth as you imagine letting go of deeper levels of tension as you find them. Imagine the joints opening into more space and the other parts getting longer. You can do this for just a few breaths or as many breaths as you need to cover all the tightness you discover.

Go through each finger alternating between the body parts and the fingers. Try taking three breaths for each finger. If you feel like you want to do more after completing all five fingers, start the whole process again from the little finger. You can do this as many times as you want. Try one breath for each finger.

You will probably discover tension in parts of your body that you are not now aware of. You will get better as you do this and soon just thinking about a finger will automatically relax its corresponding body part. It is not necessary to palm while doing the five finger relaxation.

**DOING THE "ABC'S":** If you have trouble seeing pictures in your mind. Trying to visualize makes many people anxious and frustrated. To learn to visualize, try the following exercise. Palm for one hundred breaths to calm yourself. Count each breath. If your mind wonders and you forget what number you are on (a sign of anxiety), go back to one and start over. You may have to make many attempts before you finally succeed. When you do, you will be relaxed enough to continue with the next phase. Don't worry if you fall asleep in the procedure, the deep rest will do you good and in the morning you may have better luck.

Continue palming and say to yourself, "I call for the letter A." Wait for the letter to come but don't try to do anything to make it come. Do this for three breaths without judging or frustrating yourself. Then let go of A and "Call for the letter B." After three breaths, drop B and call for C. Continue through the rest of the letters without expectation, effort or judgment.

Do this in the morning and at night for two months. At first you may get no images but after several days or even weeks, letters may come. Soon more letters and then all of them will appear. As they become stronger you will be able to manipulate them with just a thought. You might make the letters shrink or grow larger. You might turn a letter up-side-down or make one of wooden blocks and see three dimensional. It may take a long time and require much of patience but if you want to be able to visualize, this exercise may work for you.

**CHANTING TWELVE THROUGH ONE:** In this exercise you make a long sustained sound using different parts of your vocal mechanism. Voicing sounds make the inside of your head vibrate. Different sounds vibrate different parts of your head. Try the following: close your ear holes with a fingertip; make the sound of the letter N; feel the sound vibrate the inside of your head; change the sound to that of a V; feel the sound vibrations move to different places in your skull. Try the different vowel sounds. These vibrations seem to relax and cleanse your brain.

The first twelve numbers contain many different sounds. And it is easy to remember the sequence even if your mind lets go into the feelings. Proceed by closing your ear holes, taking a big breath and then vocalizing the number twelve in slow motion — tttttttt-wwwwwwww-eeeeeee-lllllll-vvvvvvvv-eeeeeee — making the segments last for the whole exhale. Take another big breath and do eleven — eeeeeee-lllllll-eeeeeee-vvvvvvvv-eeeeeee-nnnnnnnnn. . . , then ten, nine, eight and so on. Feel the vibrations open up the inside of your head. Experiment with opening your throat and nose to get maximum vibration and energy.

**PALMING EYE STRETCH VISUALIZATION:** is good for your eyes because it increases the blood flow to your eyes. Palm in a comfortable posture and breathe slowly and deeply for ten breaths while relaxing. Imagine your neck is relaxing, allowing your spine to get longer, your shoulders to broaden and drop and your stomach to release tension. Pay attention to the symmetry of the two sides of your body. Feel for subtle details, for a slight torque in your physique. Do your hips, shoulders, chest or neck feel aligned or twisted left, right, up or down? Do your relaxed eyes aim forward or seem to pull in some other direction. Relax into the sensation that your body and eyes are radiating a beam of



energy aimed straight ahead of you extending to infinity. Hold this forward orientation, untwisted and unified in your awareness as you breathe.

Once you achieve the sense of your body's direction, begin the eye stretching exercise. Inhale and then move your eyes all the way to the left. Stretch them but don't over-do it. As you slowly exhale keep your eyes left. Feel your body. Does it seem to twist in reaction to your eye stretch? Work to keep the centered, forward orientation described above. Inhale as you continue with eyes oriented left and body forward. Now move your eyes to the center and exhale, letting go of all effort. Feel your body relax. Continue as you slowly inhale.

Next stretch eyes to the right and exhale repeating the steps above: Move, exhale and inhale for each eye position. Return to center between each direction. Stretch first to the left, then center, right, center, up, center, down, center, upper-left, center, lower-right, center, upper-right, center, lower-left, center. Work to develop subtle awareness of body orientation and a unified, relaxed anatomy that does not twist off center in response to eye posture. These eye stretches can be practiced with eyes open or closed, palming or not.

**LOVE, TRUST AND GRATITUDE:** Try the following visualization. You can do this visualization at any time, even without palming. It takes just a moment when you get good at it. LOVE Remember a person or animal for whom you have a strong love. Recall an actual event or make one up. Stay in the scene allowing the feeling of loving that person, place or thing to grow until you experience an outflow of energy from your body towards the object of your love. Once you feel this bodily shift, let it build. Now you are ready for trust.

TRUST Develop trust feelings by recalling the many times you succeeded beyond your expectations even though at some time in the process of getting there you were convinced that you would fail. Yet, you may still see doom rather than victory as you struggle to reach your next goals. Say to yourself, "How can I predict failure with such certainty when I have so many examples that my anxiety was premature. Who am I, from my lowly perspective, to doubt that some larger force helps and blesses me in my efforts." Remember a time of great success. Experience the sense of accomplishment and a connection beyond yourself. Let your body sense a fullness and certitude about yourself and that a love and commitment is extended to you from a higher power.

LOVE & TRUST When you experience this in your body, go back to your love pictures. When the love streaming come, shift again to fill yourself with trust. Go back and forth until both physical sensations blend, the peace of trust and the joy of love. Bathe yourself in love and trust for a few moments.

GRATITUDE From deep inside let a bubble of gratitude expand and burst and flow out to blend with love and trust. Experience the clarity and grace of the love, trust and gratitude consciousness. This feeling is you and you can attain it by playing with the above images as often as you will.

LOVE, TRUST & GRATITUDE Practice looking in ways that produce wellness. Learn to look with love in your eyes. We can see emotion in a person's eyes. Actors learn to make their eyes angry or fearful. They also learn to make them convey love or trust. You can too. Angry eyes appear less relaxed than loving, trusting or grateful eyes. These are healthier ways to use your eyes. Practice by consciously gazing with love, trust and/or gratitude at something easy: a pet, a photo of a loved one, or if you're lucky, at an actual loved one. Expand your practice to include everyday objects like your computer, a book you are reading, and the TV newscaster. Eventually you will even be able to do it with your tax forms. Now try it with co-workers, family members, service people or, if you dare, strangers and people with whom you are in conflict.

**REMEMBERING BLACK:** Remembering blackness can be very restful to the eyes and mind. Palm, breathe, relax and remember something that you once saw. My grandmother had a very black coat. I once saw a Cadillac painted metallic black, it was at night in yellow sodium street lamps and I still remember how black it looked. Patent leather shoes. Albert, our neighbor's dog, a black cat running away from me on the sidewalk. Think of a black hat for three breaths. Breathe and wait for the memory of the black hat. Then think of a black shoe for three more breaths. Continue with a black cat, dog, horse, umbrella, licorice, ink blot, dress, purse, belt, piano, bird, whale, car, or book. Continue with as many items that fit into your practice time of or repeat some of the same ones. Don't strain for an image and don't feel badly if one doesn't come. Just wait with patience and energy.

## SUNNING

Need to take a break? Go outside and sun your eyes. Sunlight is beneficial for the eyes if taken in moderation and in proper technique. Comfort is always your guide. Sunning helps to keep the eyes young and flexible. Recent research shows that lack of time outdoors increases myopia and time out in natural light helps prevent its onset and progression. Conditioning the eyes by exposing them to bright red light helps protect the retina from excessive ultraviolet light and hypoxia damage. Also, exposing the eyes to bright light helps get them used to handling high levels and reduces discomfort and ocular stress (photophobia) while simultaneously relaxing the eyes. Bates says that learning to relax when exposing your eyes to stress situations makes us aware of unconscious stress habits. Awareness is the first, important step to changing a bad habit. The most basic practice of sunning consists of **closing the eyes**, facing the sun and gracefully swaying (turning) the head left and right **while breathing** slowly and deeply. Feel the warmth of the sun on your eyes. Imagine the warmth is penetrating through your eyelids and deep into your eyes. One practice is to alternate between sunning and palming (20 breaths of sunning and 10 breaths of palming). When you have time, do this for 5-15 or more minutes. Remember to sun your eyes for several breathes whenever you go outside into the sunshine.

You can use a magnifying glass or mirror to focus the light on your closed eyelids to increase the intensity of the sunlight. But you must be very, very careful to not burn your eyelids. If the focused light feels hot, hold the magnifier closer in or farther away to change the focus from a tiny point to a larger circle of light. Best way to start is to focus the sun on the palm of your hand held near your eye so you can see where. Hold the magnifier with the other hand. Position it to focus the sun onto your palm. at a distance where the focus is a quarter or a half an inch in diameter. Move the l.

## CENTRAL FIXATION

Bates: "By central fixation is meant the ability to see one letter or one object regarded in such a way that all other letters or nearby details are seen worse in proportion as it is removed from the point of fixation. When the vision is imperfect, the eye tries to see all parts of the visual field equally well at one time. This is a great strain upon the eye and mind. Anything that rests the eyes tends to restore the normal power of central fixation.

**Central fixation can also be gained by conscious practice**, and this is sometimes the quickest and easiest way to improve the sight. When the patient becomes conscious that he sees the centrally fixated details best, it becomes possible to work to reduce the size of centrally fixated area. Since small objects cannot be seen without central fixation, the reading of fine print, when it can be done, is one of the best of visual exercises, and the dimmer the light in which it can be read and the closer to the eye it can be held the better."

**Bates Exercise to develop central fixation through imagination:** "The following method of using the imagination has produced quick results in many cases: The patient is asked to look at the **largest** letter on the test card at the near-point, and is usually able to observe that a small area, about a square inch, appears blacker than the rest, and that when the part of the letter seen worst is covered, part of the exposed area seems blacker than the remainder. When the part seen worst is again covered, the area of maximum blackness is still further reduced. When the part seen best has been reduced to about the size of a letter on the bottom line, the patient is asked to imagine that such a letter occupies this area and is blacker than the rest of the letter. Then he is asked to look at a letter on the bottom line and imagine that it is blacker than the largest letter. Many are able to do this, and at once become able to see the letters on the bottom line"



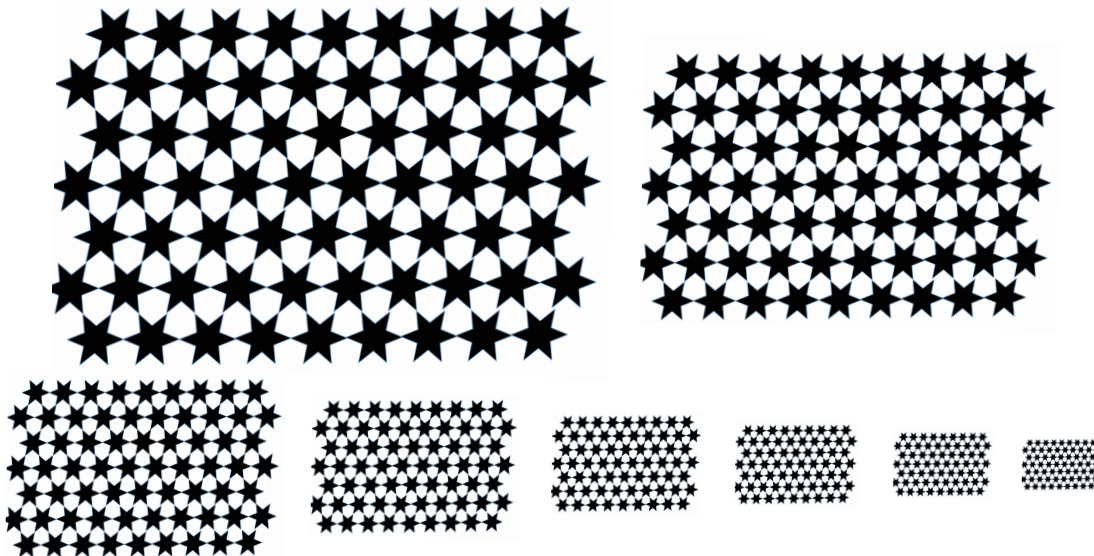
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## STAR-CIRCLE CHART

This practice organizes central fixation (foveal fixation) and its immediate surround (parafoveal). It is a perceptual learning practice that can improve the aiming and dexterity of visual processing (visual acuity). Perceptual training requires dedicated practice sessions at a level of difficulty that challenges the desired perceptual skill at its present level and increases as the skill develops. This requires conscious attention with minimal anxiety, straining, staring, breath holding, etc. Palming or closing the eyes to minimize strain is recommended before practicing and is encouraged during the session when needed. If possible without straining or becoming anxious, imagine or remember these visual images during these palming breaks and at other times during the day. Best improvement results from 20-minute practice sessions, several times a week for several months followed by weekly or bi-weekly trainings.

Look at the middle of one of the stars on the largest chart. Notice that the fixated star looks more distinct than the non-fixated stars and that a white circle surrounds the star that looks whiter than the rest of the white background. Move your eyes to fixate the next star and see the white circle now surrounds this star. Starting at the top left star move to fixate each star in that row. Fixate from star to star across the next rows. Wait to allow the fixated star to sharpen and the surrounding circle to whiten.

Warm up by starting with the largest chart and then smaller ones to find your threshold chart (i.e., where you can sometimes see the white circle and sometimes not). Here you learn to relax to more precisely aim at a star to see its white circle. Your vision may become disorganized wherein the details are lost, and you see patterns of dotted lines. Maybe it's time to palm or close your eyes for ten breaths or to go back to using a larger chart to bring back the star's details and circles. Practice this with the goal of seeing the white circle whiten more easily and quickly. Flow from star to star with a sense of ease but don't try to speed through the chart. Eventually, as each star clears, and your fixation refines its natural alignment, you may feel a simultaneous and spontaneous release of tension in your body, eyes and mind. Be mindful of straining or staring; breathe, blink and swing the stars instead. Remember to align on the center of the stars and to wait to see the enhanced whiteness of the circle. Practice with each eye alone and with both eyes. Practice at various distances (including far and very near). Change the light levels (it is easier to see under bright light).



**Bates' Shifting and Swinging:** The eye with imperfect sight habitually stares and tries to freeze its aim at the point of fixation. The normal eye does not stare as long as it has normal sight. Eyes with normal vision never regards a point for more than a fraction of a second. Instead, the normal eye shifts constantly to aim at one detail and then to another and another. Normally we aren't aware of this and we don't notice the movement of a letter or other object as it moves across the retina. When the normal eye has normal sight, the small letters of the Snellen Test Card are imagined to be moving from side to side, slowly and continuously, across the width of the letter." Swinging is the practice of learning to see this movement.

"This habit of staring can be corrected by consciously imitating the unconscious shifting of the normal eye. It is a slow, short, easy swing moving about as fast as one would count orally. The width of the swing is not more than the width of the letter, and it is remembered or imagined as easily as it is possible without any effort whatsoever. With practice one learns to swing the tiniest objects over the shortest distance, even a period can be seen to swing with a back and forth opposite movement."

"As a rule, mental shifting and swinging are easier at first than visual. Persons with imperfect sight have become able to imagine this illusion by alternately remembering or imagining the small letter moving from side to side continuously. With their eyes open they may be able to do it for a moment or flash it, at first occasionally, and later more continuously, until they are cured. When visual or mental swinging is successful, everything one thinks of appears to have a slight swing. "

"The ease and speed of swinging can be aided by moving one's thumbnail back and forth across a nail of a finger on that hand. Practice moving the thumb slowly, easily and automatically and allow the eyes to flow with the movement of the thumb."

**Bates' Memory:** "When the sight is normal the mind is always perfectly at rest, and when the memory is perfect the mind is also at rest. Therefore, it is possible to improve the sight by the use of the memory. Anything the patient finds agreeable to remember is a rest to the mind. The most favorable condition for the exercise of the memory is, usually, with the eyes closed and covered, but by practice it becomes possible to remember equally well with the eyes open. When patients are able, with their eyes closed and covered, to remember perfectly a letter of diamond type, it appears, just as it would if they were looking at it with the bodily eyes, to have a slight movement, while the openings inside the letter appear whiter than the rest of the background. "

**Bates' Imagination:** "Vision is largely a matter of imagination and memory. Imagination is closely allied to memory, for we can imagine only as well as we remember, and in the treatment of imperfect sight the two can scarcely be separated. The cultivation of these faculties not only improves the interpretation of the pictures on the retina but improves the retinal images themselves".

"Imagination is very efficient in improving the vision. When some patients look at a blurred letter that they already know, they can close their eyes and imagine it better than they see it with their eyes open. By alternately imagining a known letter with the eyes closed and with the eyes opened, not only does the imagination of the letter often improves to normal with eyes open but the letter itself look clear when they look at it. The patient who is able to do this is also able to demonstrate that when the imagination is improved for one known letter the vision for unknown letters of the same size also improves. By imagining the first letter of a line perfectly the patient can tell the second letter and other letters that are not yet known."

**BATES' QUESTION**—*I still cannot visualize "black" what else can I use as a substitute? W. H. B.*  
**ANSWER**—*Don't try to see anything. If it is an effort to visualize black, think of something that is pleasant, for instance, a field of daisies, a sun-set, etc. The result will be just as beneficial.*

**QUESTION**—*To palm successfully is it necessary to remember black or try to see black?*  
**ANSWER**—*No. When one palms successfully the eyes and mind are relaxed and black is usually seen, but any effort to see black is a strain which always fails.*

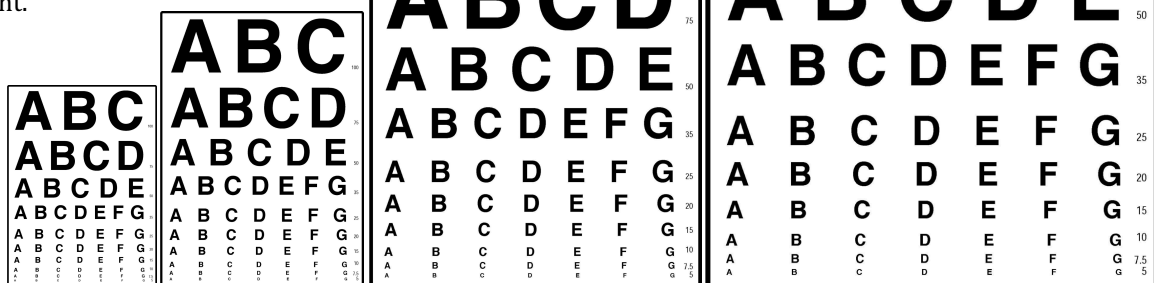
**Bates' Flashing:** "It is the unconscious habit of making-an-effort to see that strains the eyes and spoils the sight. Some persons with imperfect sight can be taught to improve their vision by learning to look at a letter or object for a fraction of a second without effort using the following practice: The eyes are rested for a few minutes by closing or palming. The patient is reminded to not try hard to see and not to worry if they fail to see it. Then they are directed to open their eyes, look at a letter on the test card for a fraction of a second and quickly close the eyes again before the habit of strain can reassert itself. The eyes are closed or palmed again to rest them and the process repeated again and again. I have called this procedure *flashing*, and through this practice permanent relaxation is sometimes very quickly obtained. As the sight improves learn to quickly shift to something else. Dodge your improved vision."

**Bates' Blinking and Dodging:** "Do not stare. Dodge it. Whenever your sight improves, shift quickly to something else. Dodge your improved vision. Whenever you see things imperfectly shift your eyes quickly to something else. Dodge your imperfect sight. To stare always lowers the vision. Closing the eyes effectually dodges perfect or imperfect sight. Usually the normal eye closes and opens unconsciously, quite frequently and at irregular intervals and for very short spaces of time. This is called Blinking and it is only another name for dodging. Dodging what? Dodging the tendency to look steadily at things all the time. All the methods which have been recommended for the improvement of the vision, *central fixation, palming, swinging, blinking* can all be grouped under the one word—*dodging*".

**Bates' Practicing:** "How much time should one devote to practicing the methods described above? The answer is—ALL THE TIME. One can practice properly for ten minutes and be comfortable. That does not mean that all the rest of the day one can strain and tear one's eyes all to pieces without paying the penalty for breaking the law. If you are under treatment for imperfect sight work to keep in mind all day long from the time you wake up in the morning until you go to bed at night the feeling of comfort, of rest, of relaxation, incessantly. It is a great deal better to do that than to feel under a strain and be uncomfortable all day long. One should secure relaxation or rest until one is perfectly comfortable and continue feeling comfortable as long as one is awake."

"Many people complain that they do not have time to practice and that they have fatigue. So, they are less inclined to practice central fixation, the swing, palming, sunning and imagining and remembering perfect sight and other things that relieve or prevent fatigue. It should be emphasized that one has just as much time to do right as to do wrong and it certainly is the wrong thing to go around most of the time suffering from fatigue."

**Bates' Reading Familiar Letters:** "The eye always strains to see unfamiliar objects and is always relaxed to a greater or less degree by looking at familiar objects. Therefore, the reading every day of small familiar letters at the greatest distance at which they can be seen is a rest to the eye and is sufficient to cure children under twelve who have not worn glasses, as well as some older children, and adults with minor defects of vision. Reading the Snellen Test Card twice a day or oftener, with each eye separately without glasses, is a great help in improving the sight."



A B C

100

A B C D

75

A B C D E

50

A B C D E F G

35

A B C D E F G

25

A B C D E F G

20

A B C D E F G

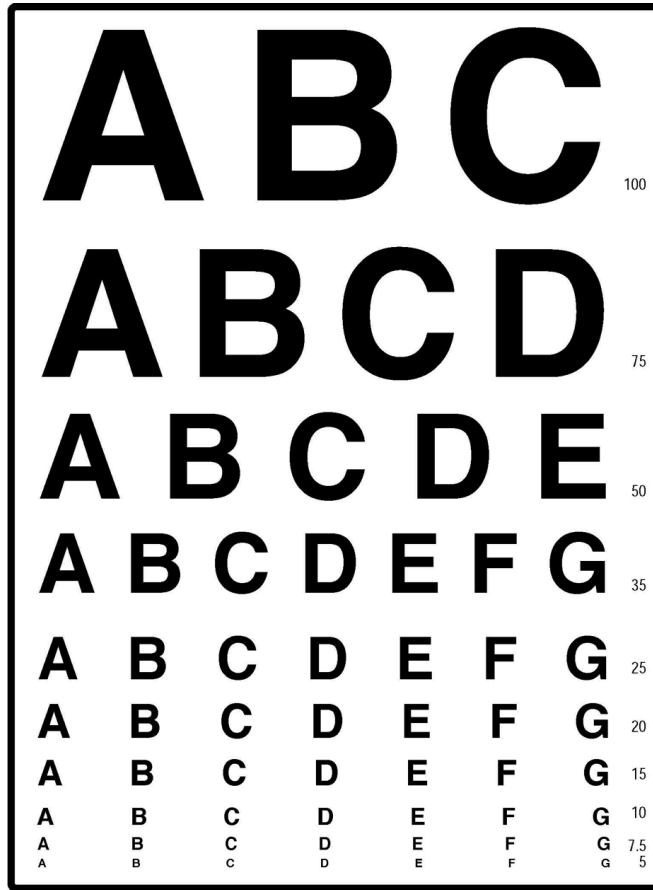
15

A B C D E F G

10

A B C D E F G

7.5  
5

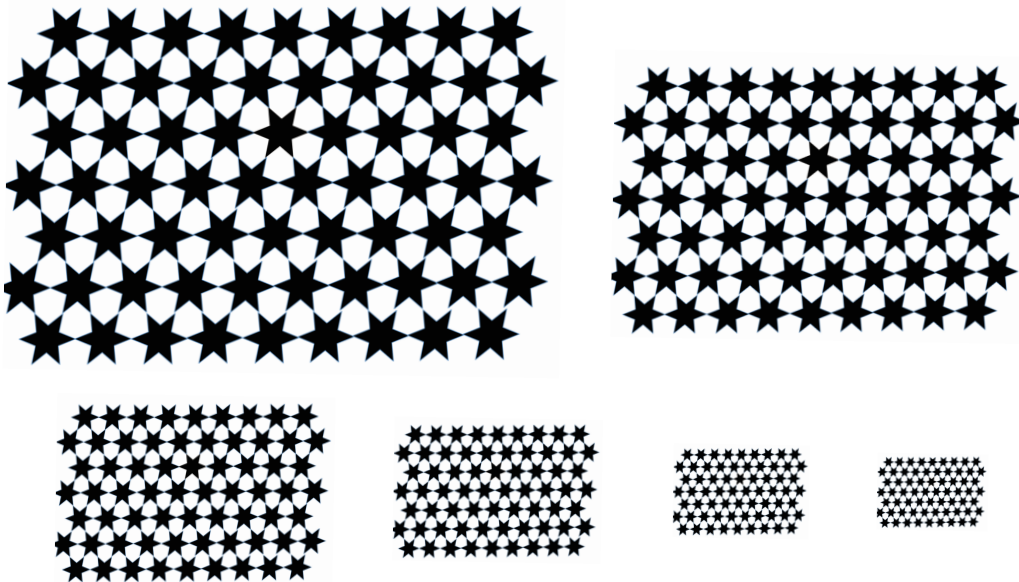


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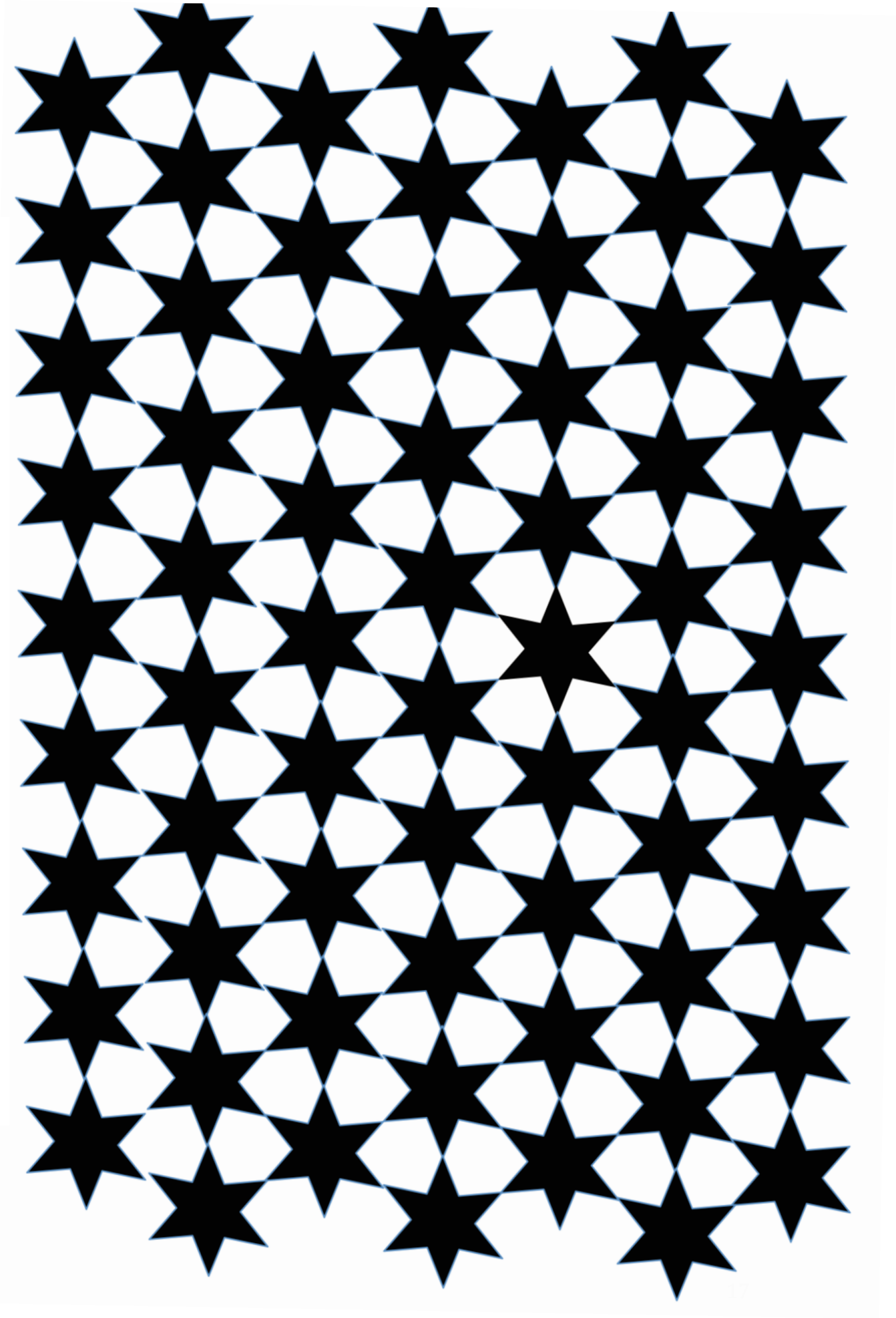
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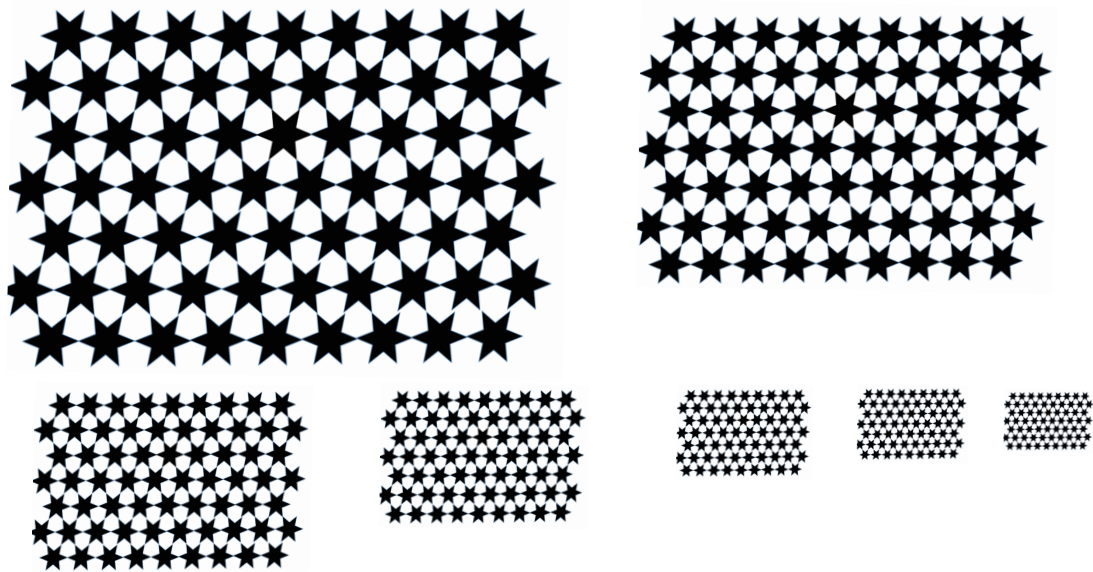
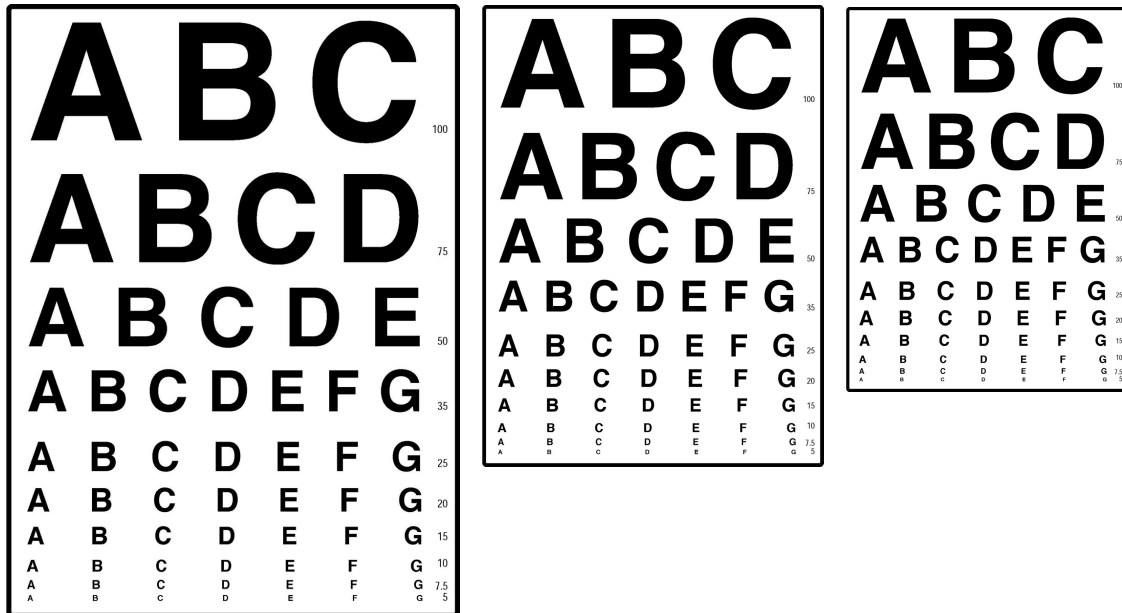




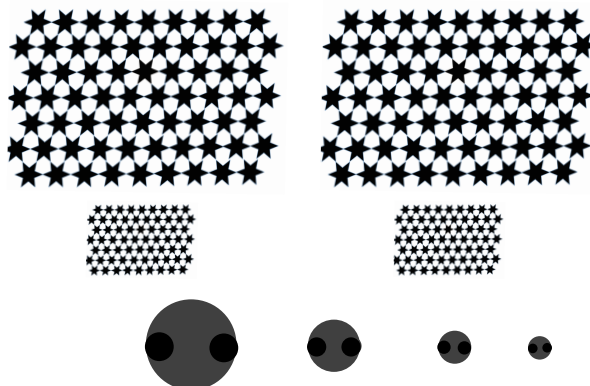
Use for training at distance. Tape to a wall or back of a chair and back away until you find your threshold (when it becomes difficult to see the white circles. Relax, breathe, close and open eyes, swing between stars, etc. Increase the distance as you improve.



The ABC charts are to transfer the effects of central fixation practice on visual acuity.



Below charts to practice while converging & diverging



To practice swinging O's

