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Theme: Health, Soul, blue light

Article: Blue Light Exposed: Digital Eyestrain Related to Long Term Consequences

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Web: <http://destinationfemme.com/blue-light-exposed-digital-eyestrain/>

Publisher: Destination femme

Blue Light Exposed: Digital Eyestrain Related to Long Term Consequences

1 Within the past recent years, the rise of screen time has increased. Not only are we looking at computer screens at work, but we stare at the screens of our cellphones, our TVs and iPads as well. We all know that too much screen time is harmful to our eyes, but do we truly know the technicalities behind it? Why exactly is it bad for us to be staring into the depths of technology for hours everyday and what exactly is [Blue Light](#)?

Dr. Ken Mandadakis is an optometrist that acts as an educator on behalf of Blue Light Exposed. After practicing in the field for 13 years he has become somewhat of an expert of Blue Light and its side effects. He gave us a quick low down as to how Blue Light affects us and how we can modify the effects. Everyday we get natural Blue Light that radiates from the sun, and a certain amount of it is required to keep our circadian rhythm functioning properly. The

Blue Light helps to regulate our sleep and wake cycles. However, everything in life is best experienced in moderation. Overexposure to Blue Light (such as using computers or watching TV at night before we go to bed) can affect our sleep cycles, thus affecting our alertness overall.

Blue Light research has been ongoing for the past 6-7 years, and results from studies on nurses and doctors doing shift work has shown that increased exposure has resulted in increased risks of developing melanomas. When we're exposed to Blue Light, it tricks our minds into thinking that we're awake, thus when we go to sleep overnight, our minds aren't fully in slumber and end up affecting our quality of sleep. So although you may be sleeping 8 hours, it may not be the best 8 hours that you need to function properly.

[Blue Light has also been shown to affect our melatonin levels](#), which in turn regulates our sleeping patterns as well. About 80% of our melatonin is produced by our gastrointestinal tract (G.I.). Children with ADHD and autism usually also report GI problems besides their existing concerns. This inhibits their melatonin production and in turn they can't regulate their circadian rhythms as well. Because of this, Blue Light is a much larger risk for them and it's important that this issue be addressed. Nowadays many parents utilize screen time as a reward to positive results (ex. 'You did a great job cleaning your room Amy, you can use the iPad for 1 hour.') without realizing that Blue Light goes hand in hand with melatonin, therefore harming their children in an overall attempt to reward them.

4 It's easy to take away screen time from children, but many adults utilize computers in their everyday jobs to get work done. So how exactly can we minimize the effects of Blue Light?

- Have children look away from a screen for 5 minutes once every 30 minutes
- Adults should do the same too, but if you can't be distracted often at work:
 - Glasses wearers can get a Blue Light coating added to their lenses (~\$20)
 - Contact lens wearers can get fakes lenses with the coating
- On their Twitter page, Blue Light Exposed also recommends using the 20-20-20 rule:
 - Every 20 minutes, take a 20 second break and look at something that's 20 feet away from you

Studies have shown that following these simple steps helps to deliver positive results. Your eyes won't feel as strained and you'll have less headaches as well. Besides those two symptoms, you'll also decrease the chances of developing melanomas as opposed to not protecting your eyes at all. The Blue Light coating for lenses is readily available and can be done anywhere worldwide. All you have to do is set up an appointment with your optometrist and they'll walk you through the process of obtaining it!