Computer Vision Syndrome- ARE YOU A SUFFERER?

People who sit in front of the computer for extended periods of time often experience a variety of symptoms including headaches, neck strain, backaches and wrist pain.  Sadly, the most common symptoms- eye strain, intermittent or constant blurry vision and dry eyes- are often ignored and considered expected.  How can we fix this?

In order to maximize productivity and minimize visual symptoms, it is important to wear prescription glasses that are appropriate for the computer distance and angle of view.  Sometimes, general eyeglass prescriptions may not be sufficient.  Additionally, trying on various glasses at the store and self prescribing can be detrimental to the eyes for the following reasons:

- The optical centers of store bought glasses are not necessarily set to be at the center of the patient's eyes.  Prescription glasses are custom made to be set at the center of the patient's eyes who will be wearing them.
- The prescriptions are always the same between the lenses in store bought glasses but usually, the patient's two eyes do **not** require the same prescription.

- Patients unknowingly tend to choose a power of the over the counter glasses that is too strong for the computer.  The eyes then adapt to them and weaken.
- When the eyes are strained and struggling to see clearly, blinking becomes less frequent and patients may experience dry, sandy, itchy or even watery eyes causing the very common ocular condition known as dry eye.

If the powers of the store bought lenses are not customized to the patient's needs, they can cause more harm than good over the course of time.  It is important to wear glasses that are specifically designed to function comfortably at the computer.

There are various other tips for comfortable computer viewing including adjusting the screen contrast, minimizing reflections on the screen, keeping the room lights on and adjusting the monitor to be 20-26 inches from the eyes and slightly below eye level.

Also, don't forget to take occasional breaks and look into the distance while resting.