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Saccadic Training

You have been diagnosed with *Oculomotor Dysfunction*, a condition in which the eye movement control center in the brain has difficulty directing the eyes to make accurate “jumps” from one fixation target to another, as in reading. This is the simplest form of exercise used to correct Oculomotor Dysfunction. Children will need a “coach” to direct them.

Take two pencils or pens (“targets”) and hold them with their bases together, tips up, separated at about a 30-degree angle in a “V” pattern. Hold them at reading distance or slightly closer. Direct the patient to focus on one target and prompt him/her to **THINK** where the other target is (but not to move their eyes to the other target until you give the command). Then give the command; “**Ready...Set...Move!!**” The patient should move his/her eyes to the other target in a single smooth movement.

Example; “Focus on the pencil tip. **Think** where the other one is (no peeking!). **Ready...Set...Move!!** Now keep looking at THAT target and think where the other one is,” etc. As you progress, the goal will be to increase the **pace** of the movement **without sacrificing accuracy or control**. So, your command sequence will get shorter: from **Ready...Set...Move** to **Ready...Move** to **Move move move!**

The coach's role is to observe the accuracy and the ease of movements. When struggle becomes evident as the pace is increased, you can pause the exercise, rotate the targets 45-degrees, and begin again at the slow pace. Continue until the patient is unable to continue or **at least 5 minutes** is up (10 minutes is even better!) Repeat daily for at least two months.