



“Changing the way you see and interact with the world, changing lives through vision therapy.”

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Burbank Optometric Center vision therapy program FAQ

What is vision therapy?

Vision therapy is a neurological rehabilitation program which re-trains the brain how to accurately fixate, focus, track and coordinate the eyes. It is effective in remediating conditions such as strabismus, amblyopia, convergence insufficiency, focusing and tracking problems and improving visual information processing skills (visual perception). Many athletes take advantage of the improvement in vision and sports performance. Vision therapy in the form of neuro-optometric rehabilitation can help stroke and traumatic brain injury patients get back to a more normal life.

Why haven't I ever heard of vision therapy before?

Vision therapy is not new it has been around for decades and is backed by thousands of scientific studies proving its efficacy, including studies by the National Eye Institute.

Why does my pediatrician and ophthalmologist say that vision therapy doesn't work?

Unfortunately, there has been a long-standing disagreement among the medical community and optometry regarding vision therapy effectiveness. Ophthalmology actually has a rudimentary form of vision therapy called orthoptics. Optometry has just taken orthoptics and expanded it into the realm of neuroscience. Ophthalmologists prefer to treat the strabismus by surgery, admitting that it usually takes several surgeries to achieve a cosmetically desirable outcome. Surgery, however, will not train the brain how to use the two eyes together, nor improve any other visual dysfunctions listed above. The previous head of the ophthalmology department at Harvard supports vision therapy. If vision therapy were not effective, optometrists would not still be providing this highly valued service.

Who provides the vision therapy services?

Our vision therapy program is directed by Dr. Lori Nishida-Eugenio, who has almost 30 years experience and is a fellow of the college of optometrists in vision development. Along with Beckie Sweeney, who has almost 10 years experience as a certified vision therapist.

What does vision therapy look like?

Dr. Nishida-Eugenio has the unique position and perspective of being the mother of a special needs adult with autism. Having lived through her experiences with doctors, therapists, special education and vision issues, makes her approach to each of her patients unique to that individual.

Our program approaches each individual as a whole person. We consider not only their eyes and visual function, but also other sensory systems such as auditory processing, the vestibular input, in addition to proprioceptive information. We look at the diet and exercise habits of the individual as well.

In order to be successful, our program is quite rigorous. It involves once or twice weekly sessions in the office along with daily home training. The minimum amount of time for a vision therapy program is six months depending upon the number of areas and severity of visual dysfunctions. As such, it requires a serious commitment to the program.

What is required before I can begin vision therapy?

You must have had a comprehensive eye exam by an optometrist or ophthalmologist within the past 12 months. A visual acuity screening at the pediatrician's office or the school nurses office does not count. A copy of these records and a completed questionnaire must be received by our office before an appointment can be made for the developmental vision evaluation. The waiting time for an evaluation is about one month.

Once the evaluation is completed and a report of findings and recommendations is generated, you will have a one hour conference with Dr. Nishida to discuss the results and recommendations. At that point you will be able to schedule your vision therapy sessions. To make the fastest progress, a 45 minute session in office once or twice a week is recommended.

How much does vision therapy cost?

The 45 minute sessions cost \$175 with Dr. Nishida Eugenio and Beckie co-treating. 30 minute sessions are available at \$117 per session with Beckie, however this extends the length of the therapy program.

Do you accept insurance for vision therapy?

Due to extremely low insurance reimbursement, we are unable to accept any new insurance therapy patients at this time. If you have medical insurance and you believe it will help pay for vision therapy, you can visit the COVD website at www.covd.org to find a provider near you. You will need to call each office to find out if they are excepting insurance patients.