

The background of the image is a lush, green landscape. In the foreground, there are several tall stalks of yellow flowers, possibly rapeseed, with green leaves. Behind them, a field of golden-yellow crops stretches across the middle ground. In the distance, a small village with a prominent church spire is visible on a hillside. The sky is overcast and grey. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

The Eyebright Method

of vision improvement

Healing Eyes Naturally

What is the Eyebright Method?

It is a highly effective system for healing eye conditions. In many patients, especially those whose eyesight is gradually deteriorating, the system can offer improved vision.

It is based on the ancient wisdom of Chinese medicine. It is complementary to orthodox medicine, and can be used alongside all normal treatments.

The foundation of the method is the obvious fact that the eyes are a living part of a living organism. This organism has energy and vitality, and illness occurs when something happens to block this vitality. Illness can often be reversed by releasing the body's own healing energy and directing it to the eyes.

In this introductory pamphlet, we discuss the eight causes of eye diseases, which are basically eight factors which can reduce the flow of energy to the eyes, and then we discuss the eight cures, or ways in which the energy can be encouraged to return to the eyes.

The Eight Causes of Eye diseases

There are many causes of eye diseases, some of which, such as staring at computer screens come from outside, while others, such as hereditary disposition, are internal. There are eight basic categories of causes these are:

In the following pages we will describe how these factors influence the eyes.

- ❖ Strain on the eyes
- ❖ Stress, fear
- ❖ Family tendencies
- ❖ Poor body condition
- ❖ Not enough energy
- ❖ Past injury
- ❖ Looking habits
- ❖ Posture habits

Strain on the eyes

The most common immediate cause of eye problems and diseases is strain on the eyes. Typical examples include reading fine print in poor light, driving for long periods in the dark, and the harmful effects of computer screens. In one patient who came to visit, her job involved a basic minimum of 8 hours a day entering data into a computer. Since the department where she worked was short staffed, she had to eat her lunch sandwiches while continuing to enter the data, and she had to stay for an extra two hours after work. She suffered from glaucoma, which was rapidly deteriorating, and was not responding to any treatment. It was my opinion that if she persisted in this work schedule, that her eyes would continue to deteriorate.

Emotional stress, fear

Any emotion can affect the eyesight. The two common ones are rage and fear. For example I had a patient who had suffered from migraines for her whole life. It was quite normal for her to get some visual disturbance during migraine, but one day while she was having a migraine, something occurred to send her into a furious rage. The effect of this was so strong that she burst a minor blood vessel in the eye. At first she did not notice it, for the visual disturbance was the same as was normal during a migraine; but when she awoke the next morning, she found that the visual disturbance was permanent, and here eyes had been slightly damaged.

Another common emotion is fear. This is especially a factor contributing to short sight, and many people who manage to overcome their their tendency to short sight, find that they have to overcome their fear in the process.

An example of this is a friend who had very short sight, and who wore spectacles. Over the years she had found a way of coping with difficult situations in life: when she could not cope, she would take off her spectacles. Then she could not see what was in front of her, and so she did not have to 'face up' to it. She had a big problem when she had laser surgery to correct the short sight. She could no longer retreat into a blurred land. All the difficult situations in life could not be made to go away simply by lifting up the lenses. This was a major problem for her, and she nearly had a nervous breakdown.

Family tendencies

Everyone knows that there inherited tendencies. We learn so much from our parents, mainly good, but also some of their bad habits. One of the bad habits we can learn is habits of looking. How this happens is a mystery, but happen it does.

Likewise, we inherit the genes from our parents, and these genes may predispose to certain eye diseases, such as retinitis pigmentosa.

There are some people who believe that genes contain the whole of a person's health destiny, so that if you inherit the genes for RP, then there is nothing that can be done. This is a rather simplistic view, and is not born out in clinical practice. Of course if you have the genes for RP, you are very likely to get it, but it is by no means certain. What it depends on is whether certain genes are activated or not, and this can sometimes be changed. We have seen many cases of incurable gene conditions changing as a result of alternative medicine of one sort or another.

Poor body condition

The eye is an organ of the body, and as such it needs nourishment. If there is an imbalance in the body, then this may have an effect on the eyes. A well known example of this is the retinopathy which is a further development of diabetes.

In the Eyebright method we recognise a far wider range of body conditions which can cause eye problems. This is due to the observation more than 2000 years ago that there are similarities between parts of the eye and other parts of the body. For example, the retina is a network of nerves, and so is susceptible to the same influences as other nerves in the body. Consequently a patient with macular degeneration is likely to have the same body condition that gives rise to motor-neurone disease.

Likewise, the whites of the eyes are similar to mucous membranes. Patients with irritated eyes often have irritation in other mucous membranes as well. A common example is the connection between asthma and irritated eyes during hay fever.

Sometimes we find that the eye problem is part of a general state of poor nutrition, which has built up over many years of unhealthy life style. In other patients we find that their body has accumulated toxins which have affected the eyes. One of the worst is mercury, which can leak out of fillings into the upper jaw and so to the eyes. Another common one is the cumulative effects of excessive alcohol.



Mercury can leak out of fillings and affect the eyes

Not enough energy

It takes energy to see. Energy is needed to work the muscles in the eye, for the function of the nerves, for the blood supply. There may be nothing 'medically' wrong, but if a person is tired all the time, then the eyes too will be tired, and will not function so well. It is important to keep the overall body energy up by a healthy lifestyle. This includes taking enough exercise to get the energy circulating, getting good enough quality food, and getting enough sleep.

Past injury

It is well known that a blow to the head can injure the eyes. After a mild injury one may see sparks for a while. A heavier blow may even cause retinal detachment.

Less well known is that the effects of an injury such as whip-lash may stay around for years. It may not cause actual physical damage, but it can displace the vertebrae in the neck sufficiently to cause pain and discomfort in the arms for years after. From the point of view of Chinese medicine, we think of such an injury causing a blockage in the energy channels. There may be no obvious physical damage, but there is stiffness related to the accident which is due to a Qi blockage. If the blockage blocks energy to the eyes, it may be the final factor causing a serious eye disease.

There are many places where such an injury shows, and where there may be tenderness or stiffness places are the point Yifeng SJ-17, just below the ear, and Fengchi Gb-20, at the back of the neck.



Looking habits

One of the biggest factors in eye problems is bad looking habits. How these are acquired is not altogether clear, but you can often see people screwing their eyes up or straining them to see something, when the best thing is to relax them. For some reason, when we have difficulty in seeing, we tend to strain, which actually makes it harder to see things, not easier.

This was one of the great discoveries of William Bates, founder of the Bates technique, and he developed exercises to help people to rest their eyes on what they were seeing rather than force their eyes.

Posture habits

The relation of the head to the neck can have a profound influence on the eyes. When the neck is pushed forward, and the head pulled back as in the picture, there is a sharp angle at the base of the skull. This has an effect on the nerves, the blood supply, the cranial rhythms and the energy reaching the eyes.



Posture habits develop early in life, from a variety of causes, and in some patients, there may be no change while the back of the neck is being crushed in this way. Fortunately there are many ways of overcoming the problem.

The Eight Cures for Eye Diseases

Just as there are many and varied causes of eye diseases, there are many cures. Although there may be a clearly defined medical condition, the cure may or may not be medical. It may involve something quite different from taking a medicine or receiving a treatment. To mirror the causes of eye diseases, there are eight categories of cures.

- ❖ Eyebright massage
- ❖ Qigong
- ❖ Diet, Supplements
- ❖ Herbs
- ❖ Acupuncture, Electrostim
- ❖ Osteopathy
- ❖ Alexander technique
- ❖ Bates method

Eyebright massage

This is a highly effective method for improving vision. It was first developed for the prevention cure of short sight in children, but it has been found to be effective in a wide range of eye conditions at all ages.

It is a method with brings energy to the eyes, making them function better. It is non-invasive and can be safely used with other treatments, and will usually make them more successful.



The method takes its name from an acupuncture point near the eye which is especially effective in promoting good vision. It has been used in China for centuries, but is still hardly known here in the West. We have adapted the method for Western people, and more details are given in a separate pamphlet. After using this method, the eyes feel cool, fresh and bright.

It has a special use in preventing short sight in children, and for tired eyes, it is a helpful adjunct in the treatment of all eye diseases.

Qigong

Qigong is a term used to describe a wide variety of exercises, all of which are designed to increase the amount available energy. In the Chinese tradition there are some general exercises for improving health, some more specialised ones for individual organs, and specific ones for the eyes.

The exercises are based on a different concept from the Western model of aerobics and work-outs, and are designed to invigorate the body without tiring it out. There are some very gentle ones for older people, and more strenuous ones for younger, fitter people. One of the pleasurable effects of the exercises is a sensation of relaxation and calm. A form of Qigong which has become popular in the West is Taijiquan, or Taichi as it is often known.

It is difficult to learn Qigong without a teacher, though the specific exercises for the eyes can be learned from our DVD (in production). If you cannot find a Qigong teacher, then try and find a Yoga teacher. Yoga is based on very similar principles.

Diet, Supplements,

A good diet is essential for health, both in the a general way, and for the health of the eyes. Likewise, an unsuitable diet can injure the health, and can be a factor in causing eye problems. For example, the bloodshot eyes seen after drinking too much alcohol are well known.

There are problems in finding the right diet, for what suits one person may not suit another. We know of one person who lived almost exclusively on meat, and was healthy to the end of his days. The poison for him was carbohydrate. But for most people, a mainly meat diet would be disastrous. The only way to find out is to try different diets and see how they affect you.

Organic food

Most food which is not organic is grown on depleted soil, and contains only small amounts of essential nutrients such as Lithium, Boron and Selenium. Although only tiny quantities of these substances are needed, if they are missing from the diet, the body gradually becomes weaker.

Supplements are concentrated forms of essential nutrients, and may be recommended for those, such as the elderly, who have a poor digestion, or those who are unable to obtain good quality food. Studies in the USA (where it is difficult to find good quality food) have shown dramatic improvements in eye conditions when patients take supplements to complement their normal diet.

If you are considering taking supplements, we recommend that you take the advice of a qualified nutritionist.

Herbs

Medicines from plants have been used by man since the earliest times, and plant derivatives are still widely used for eye diseases even in orthodox medicine.



Belladonna dilates the pupils

In the Western herbal tradition the plant Eyebright (*Euphrasia officinalis*) has long been used for eye complaints, especially redness and watering of the eyes. Another herb with a specific effect on the eyes is Silver ragwort (*Cineraria maritima/ Senecio cineraria*), which has long been used in the prevention and treatment of cataract.

In the Eyebright method this is taken a step further, with herbs being prescribed for the whole body condition. They may be prescribed for improving overall nutrition, or overall energy levels. They may be prescribed for any of the body conditions which contribute to the eye problem.



Acupuncture, Electrostim

Acupuncture works directly on the energy flow in the body, and can be used to increase overall energy, and to bring energy to the eyes. It has been used for thousands of years for treating all sorts of illness, including eye problems. There are acupuncture points which have a specific effect on the eyes, and other ones which can be used for treating the overall body condition, and for increasing overall energy.



Acupuncture is also of great use in treating the after effects of physical trauma, which can be an important factor in blocking the energy reaching the eyes.

How does it work?

Acupuncture works directly on the energy of the body. This energy (called Qi in Chinese medicine) has not been recognized by orthodox science, but everyone remembers what it feels like to have lots of it, and what it feels like to have used it all up! This energy runs along lines in the body known as channels (or meridians). By contacting the energy at one point on the channel, the energy can be made to flow along the channel to another point. Hence, the Liver channel runs along the inside of the leg and then up to the eyes, so many eye conditions can be treated by points on the feet.

In acute conditions, treatments may be given every day, while in chronic conditions a practitioner may recommend weekly treatments for quite a long time.

What is Electrostim?

Electrostim is an abbreviation for microcurrent stimulation of acupuncture points, and is a further extension of acupuncture. It works by passing a tiny electrical current into acupuncture points, particularly those round the eyes. The stimulating effect it has on the retina means it is of especial use in the treatment of macular degeneration.

Osteopathy

There are two main schools of osteopathy, the conventional and the cranio-sacral. Conventional osteopathy uses medium to strong manipulations to align any vertebrae that have gone out of alignment. Such a misalignment may occur as a result of injury, which, in turn, may be a cause of eye disease. When corrected the increased blood flow may enable the healing process to start.

Cranio-sacral osteopathy works on the subtle movements of the plates in the skull and elsewhere - movements which were unknown until recently. The movements may go out of rhythm, or may be much smaller than they should be, as a result of illness or injury. Thus an attack of sinusitis can affect the bones in the cheek and orbit, and so compress the movements around the eye, and be a factor in eye disease developing. When the rhythms are corrected, the energy returns to the eye, and healing can take place.

Osteopathy is of great benefit when there is a history of injury to the head and neck. Cranio-sacral osteopathy is of benefit in all eye diseases, without exception, including acute and chronic conditions. It can treat many of the conditions that can be treated by acupuncture, though it works on quite a different system.

Alexander technique

The founder of this technique, F. M. Alexander, started life as an actor in Tasmania. He developed a voice problem which threatened his career, and for which there was no medical solution. After some years of inner work, he found that his loss of voice was caused by his declaiming habits, and that these in turn were directly related to his posture. He found that he was pulling his head back when he declaimed, and that this put pressure on his vocal cords.

The cure came when he realised the importance of the relation of the head and neck, and how, by directing his energy upwards, he could speak effortlessly for hours. He then went on to teach others how to direct their energy and improve their posture, and so the Alexander technique was born.

It is of direct relevance to eye problems. Tension at the back of the neck may prevent the proper flow of blood and energy to the eyes, in just the same way as it caused Alexander's voice problems.

Bates method

Bates was a doctor who, in the early twentieth century found his eyesight deteriorating. He needed stronger and stronger spectacles, and he knew that if this progressed it would lead to more severe eye conditions such as detached retina, and eventually blindness. After exhausting all the possibilities in orthodox medicine, he set about curing himself. He reasoned that if the eye is getting worse, then if you reverse the process it can get better. In particular, focus is governed by muscles, and he believed that it should be possible to train the eye muscles to work efficiently again.

Over the course of some years, he developed ways of training the eyes, and simple ways of refreshing them. His method worked, and he was able to dispense with spectacles altogether. He wrote the influential book *Better Eyesight Without Glasses*. He developed a method where people could help themselves, and also trained some teachers in this method. These may be found on their web site: www.seeing.org

One of his key findings was that he had acquired a habit of eyesight where he did not actually *look* at what he was seeing. He sort of 'took it in' but did not look carefully, and one of the strands of his method is to learn to look carefully at everything, all the time, whether it is beautiful or ugly.

Another strand is doing exercises to strengthen the focussing muscles, such as alternately looking at something close and something in the distance.

Throughout his teaching he emphasised the need to relax the eyes, and to look by resting the eyes on the object in view, not to force the eyes at any time.

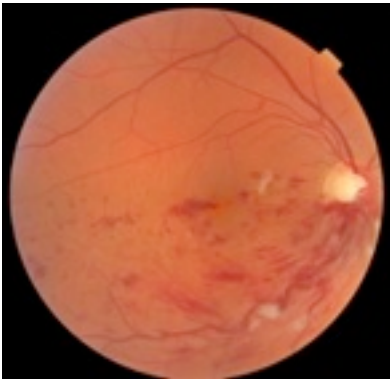
Some case histories

Retinal bleeding

Mr. C, aged 53 had had severe retinal bleeding in his left eye two years prior to coming to me. The treatment given at that time was laser coagulation. Unfortunately the treatment was not a success, and far from getting improvement, he was left completely blind in the left eye. The reason he came to see me was that the problem had returned in the right eye.

Although he lived some distance away, he came for weekly treatments until a definite improvement had been obtained. After that he came on a monthly basis.

The main treatment was acupuncture, supplemented by herbs and a change in diet. The photographs of his retina (shown below) were taken just before coming for treatment, and six months later. It can be clearly seen that the blood has been resorbed, and that the retinal arteries are in much better health.



Before treatment



After

Short sight

Master S, aged 10 was doing badly at school. When he had his eyes tested, he was found to be quite short sighted. This was a surprise to his parents as there was no history of eye weakness on either side of the family. In his case the short sight was brought on by the stress of moving house and moving school, as well as the remains of a chronic cough that had never been completely cured. His eyes were returned to perfect vision by a combination of the Eyebright massage programme, and some herbs to cure the chronic cough. With the extra energy that the herbs provided, he was able to cope with the stressful situation.

Retinitis Pigmentosa

This young man was applying for a provisional driving licence, but found that he could not pass the simple eye test. When he went to the optician, he was found to be suffering from retinitis pigmentosa, a degenerative condition of the retina. This is normally a condition of old age, and it was a great surprise to find it in one so young.



On examination it was found that there were two main causes. One, as can be seen from the picture, was his posture. With the head balanced on the neck in this position, the energy is cut off from the head, and it is easy for the energy to be prevented from reaching the eyes. He also had a long standing body condition, which gave him the symptoms of hyperactivity. This hyperactivity meant that he could not sit still easily, and had to keep moving all the time. He had great difficulty in sleeping, so there was no time for him to recover his energy at

night time. In this way his reserves of energy were depleted, and he began to get this degenerative disease.

He was helped by a combination of Alexander Technique, and acupuncture. After six months of treatment, his visual field was improved enough for him to obtain a provisional driving licence.

Diabetic retinopathy

A lady of 45 was diagnosed with diabetic retinopathy. There were clear signs of bleeding and of exudates, and her sight was failing. She had chosen to control her diabetes by careful diet, but this had not helped the retinopathy. She came for a course of acupuncture treatment because she had found in the past that this therapy had been of great benefit to her. After only a few treatments she found some small improvement in her eyesight, and improvement that continued as treatment went on.

Note The degree of improvement that can be expected is very much dependent on the patient's overall energy, and the stage of degeneration. In her case she was young, with plenty of energy, and the degeneration had not gone too far as to be irreversible.

Corneal erosion

A lady of 52 was suffering from progressive corneal erosion, the after effects of eye-strain from sitting at a computer and writing a book. A course of acupuncture and Chinese herbs enabled her to modify her lifestyle, so that she was no longer exhausted all the time. She then brought the energy back to her eyes with exercises, so completing the cure.

What to do if you have an eye problem

The first thing to do is to see a qualified ophthalmic optician. You must have a clear diagnosis of what is wrong. You are also strongly advised to take any medication that is prescribed, if there is any acute condition. For example, if you have glaucoma, the abnormally high pressure must be reduced as soon as possible, or there is a risk of permanent damage to the eyes.

When the immediate danger is over, then we advise seeing someone who is trained in the Eyebright method, and can give you advice on the best way to proceed.

First of all have your eyes tested by a qualified optician



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