

Disability awareness

Irlen® Syndrome

Irlen® Syndrome is also known as Visual Stress, Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome or Meares Irlen Syndrome. It involves visual perception or eye problems – caused by the way in which the brain interprets the visual information that is being sent through the eyes. It can make reading effectively and efficiently very difficult and people also perceive their environment differently. Those with Irlen® Syndrome have to constantly make adaptations or compensate for their eye problems, which involves exerting extra energy and effort.

Difficulties/effects can include:

Reading difficulties

- ⦿ Poor comprehension
- ⦿ Misreads words
- ⦿ Problems tracking from line to line
- ⦿ Prefers to read in dim light
- ⦿ Skips words or lines
- ⦿ Words distort, blur or move
- ⦿ Reads slowly or hesitantly
- ⦿ Gets tired easily when reading
- ⦿ Needs to take frequent breaks
- ⦿ Loses place in text
- ⦿ Avoids reading altogether
- ⦿ Reacts badly to white paper/high contrast
- ⦿ Squints, rubs eyes, blinks a lot or is wide-eyed.

Writing, IT and Maths

- ⦿ Trouble copying
- ⦿ Unequal spacing or letter size
- ⦿ Difficulty writing on a line
- ⦿ Writing goes up or down
- ⦿ Inconsistent spelling
- ⦿ Sloppy, careless mathematical errors
- ⦿ Misaligned numbers in columns
- ⦿ Strain or fatigue from computer use.

Physical symptoms

- ⦿ Sensitivity to bright light
- ⦿ Glare from bright objects
- ⦿ Strain and fatigue
- ⦿ Tired or sleepy
- ⦿ Headaches or nausea
- ⦿ Fidgety or restless
- ⦿ Eye strain - eyes hurt or water
- ⦿ Mood changes - anxious, or irritable.

Other difficulties

- ⦿ Poor concentration/lack of attention
- ⦿ Ineffective use of time
- ⦿ Lack of motivation
- ⦿ Working hard but not getting the results
- ⦿ Clumsy/accident prone
- ⦿ Bumps into things
- ⦿ Difficulty judging distances
- ⦿ Poor hand/eye coordination.

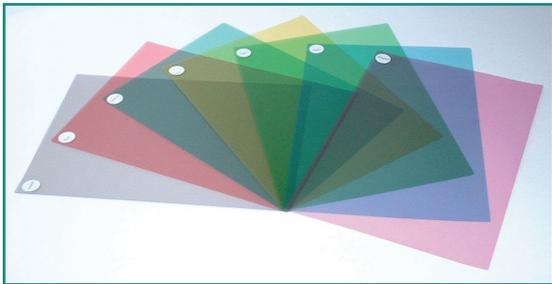
It is thought that up to 20 per cent of us are affected to some degree by visual stress. Some experts believe that nearly half of Dyslexics and a third of those with Attention Disorders may have Irlen's. It is also thought that it may be a factor sensory overload or distortion some people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder experience.

The most common and most effective way to help improve visual processing is the use of coloured overlays (using sheets of transparent coloured plastic) and tinted lenses.

Coloured overlays

Are most effective if the difficulties are mainly with reading and they can:

- ⦿ Make the print clearer and more stable
- ⦿ Improve reading speed, accuracy and comprehension
- ⦿ Help you track and keep your place when reading
- ⦿ Reduce strain tiredness and headaches
- ⦿ Increase concentration.



Coloured filters

Coloured lenses are more suitable if people have difficulties with copying, depth perception or light sensitivity.



Other solutions include:

- ⦿ Coloured paper – for both reading and writing
- ⦿ Use of a ruler to keep track of text
- ⦿ Larger clearer print
- ⦿ Changing background colours on computer screens
- ⦿ Avoiding florescent or over-bright lights
- ⦿ Frequent breaks or changes of task
- ⦿ Avoiding bright colours or busy patterns.

Contact us:

If you would like further information on how we can help you, please get in touch with us:
t: 0300 456 8113 e: training@remploy.co.uk w: www.remploy.co.uk/training

If you require this information in an alternative format, please email communications@remploy.co.uk quoting ref. R84- Nov17

