



Medical Policy Manual

Approved Revised: Do Not Implement Until 6/2/26

Orthoptic Training for the Treatment of Vision or Learning Disabilities

DESCRIPTION

NOTE: This policy addresses office-based orthoptic training and does not address standard vision therapy with lenses, prisms, filters, or occlusion.

Orthoptic training refers to techniques designed to correct accommodative and convergence insufficiency (or convergence dysfunction). Regimens may include push-up exercises using an accommodative target (e.g., pencil, letter, number or picture). To perform this exercise using a pencil, an individual holds the pencil vertically at arm's length with the sharpened tip at the top. The tip of the pencil should be just below eye level. The individual moves the pencil slowly toward the face focusing on the point. When the individual sees two pencils rather than one, the exercise is repeated.

Convergence insufficiency is a binocular vision disorder in which the eyes turn inward toward each other. Symptoms of this common condition may include eyestrain, headaches, blurred vision, diplopia, sleepiness, difficulty concentrating, movement of print, and loss of comprehension after short periods of reading or performing close activities. Prism reading glasses, home therapy with pencil push-ups, office-based vision therapy and orthoptics have been evaluated for the treatment of convergence insufficiency.

Convergence insufficiency is diagnosed by:

- Exodeviation at near vision at least 4 prism diopters greater than at far vision
- Insufficient positive fusional vergence at near (positive fusional vergence <15 prism diopters blur or break) on positive fusional vergence testing using a prism bar
- Near point of convergence break of more than 6 cm
- Appreciation by the individual of at least 500 seconds of arc on stereoacuity testing

Some learning disabilities, particularly those in which reading is impaired, have been associated with deficits in eye movements and/or visual tracking. For example, many dyslexic persons may have unstable binocular vision and report that letters may appear to move around, causing visual confusion. Currently, orthoptic training is being investigated for treatment of attention deficient disorders, dyslexia, dysphasia, and reading disorders.

Orthoptic training is also known as vision training, visual therapy, optometric vision therapy, orthoptics-eye exercises, orthoptic vision therapy, and syntonometric optometry.

POLICY

- Office-based orthoptic training for the treatment of symptomatic convergence insufficiency is considered **medically necessary** if the medical appropriateness criteria are met. **(See Medical Appropriateness below.)**
- Orthoptic eye exercises for the treatment of learning disabilities are considered **investigational**.
- Orthoptic eye exercises for all other conditions/disease, including but not limited to, slow reading and visual disorders other than convergence insufficiency is considered **investigational**.

MEDICAL APPROPRIATENESS



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- Orthoptic training is considered **medically appropriate** if **ALL** the following criteria are met:
 - Office based
 - For the treatment of symptomatic convergence insufficiency

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Any specific products referenced in this policy are just examples and are intended for illustrative purposes only. It is not intended to be a recommendation of one product over another and is not intended to represent a complete listing of all products available. These examples are contained in the parenthetical e.g. statement.
- We develop Medical Policies to provide guidance to Members and Providers. This Medical Policy relates only to the services or supplies described in it. The existence of a Medical Policy is not an authorization, certification, explanation of benefits or a contract for the service (or supply) that is referenced in the Medical Policy. For a determination of the benefits that a member is entitled to receive under his or her health plan, the Member's health plan must be reviewed. If there is a conflict between the medical policy and a health plan or government program (e.g., TennCare), the express terms of the health plan or government program will govern.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There is insufficient evidence in published studies to state whether orthoptic training for the treatment of vision or learning disabilities other than convergence insufficiency is effective.

SOURCES

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