



SIERRA NEVADA INTERNAL ARTS

Vertical Axis Tai Chi • Spinal Energy Pa Kua • Energy Body Qigong

Volume 1, No. 14
www.eurekainternalarts.com
Professional Member National Qigong Association

PO Box 4001, Truckee, CA 96160
(800) 937-3142
eurekaproductions@lto1.com

Natural Vision

The same as the martial artist's soft eye

Meir Schneider



LET'S TALK ABOUT THE EYE. If my assertion that function leads to structure is correct, what do we as modern people do that caused such a huge amount of near-sightedness to occur with so many people? Computer. Reading. Living indoors in small spaces.

What happens to the eye if you look at a distance? When you look at a distance, the lenses are

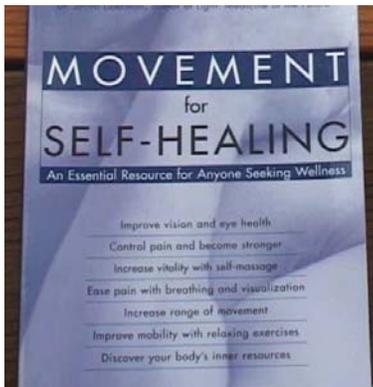
flat. Do you need to exert any energy to keep the lens flat? None whatsoever. In fact, what happens when you look at a distance is that ciliar muscles stretch and there's a ligament called the suspensory ligament that keeps the lens flat. It's a very important thing. So when you look at a distance, your ciliar muscles completely relax. When you look near, what is the shape of the lens? Convex. Like a magnifying lens in order to see better.

So what happens is our life involves much looking from near. Look at you, you live in one of the nicest places in the world, basically, and yet, because you are modern people, you're not really looking at the world you live in. You look at books, you look at computers, you look at television, you stay indoors. That is what happens these days. Farmers in the past didn't have interest in looking at books, so they looked at birds. They were illiterate. So there was nothing interesting to look at (in books). Look, I'm not saying become illiterate, by no means, but just be aware of the fact that many, many people have interests in many things, but not to look at a distance. The point is that we basically do not let nature play any role in what we do with our eyes.

What we do is, we decide when we sleep, and we decide when we are awake. Naturally we should be asleep within an hour of two after the sunset. But we don't do that these days. The fatigue of the eye leads to most eye problems. Fatigue leads to poor blood flow. Fatigue leads eventually to poor structure. And that's why the first and most important principle

INSIDE

► Exercises for the Eye • Pg. 3



of natural vision improvement is relaxation. So when you wear glasses, when you correct your eyes with laser surgery which basically makes glasses out of the cornea, there are many side effects. When you wear contacts, you

aren't dealing successfully with the fatigue that accumulates in your eyes.

The important thing is to understand that modern life tempts us not to use the eyes properly. I mean, how long have we been out of the jungle?

20,000 years? 15,000 years? Not long and even about 300-400 years ago, people used to look at a distance all the time. Now we have to make it an exercise. Make sure that 4 times a day for 7 minutes you look at a distance. And you wave your hands to the side (of your face). Why should you wave your hands to the side? To wake up your peripheral. Why? Because when you focus on a page in a book or on a computer, you will normally pay attention to the book or the computer and not to the peripheral. The wall disappears, the ceiling disappears. And in fact, when most optometrists measure peripheral vision, if you have 70% of the known peripheral vision, it is considered to be normal.

So, if you look at a distance four times a day and wave your hands to the side, seven minutes each time, you will find that your eyes are relaxed on a regular basis.

The second principle is the adjustment to light. I'm very much against sunglasses. There is a melanin layer in the retina that darkens the light. The retina has 10 layers. Only one of them is a photo receptor, another one is the main nerve layer, one of them brings you blood, one brings you protection. One of the protections is the fact that the melanin layer darkens the light. If you wear sunglasses, the melanin will migrate and deteriorate. And so sunglasses are external protection at the expense of internal protection.

For that reason I think it is best to discard them completely. The only thing you should do with sunglasses is break them and use the frames for eye exercises. When people tell me, "I need sunglasses so I won't squint," what they are telling me

is, "my pupils are weak." You shouldn't squint. Your pupils can actually contract and fixate the light in a way that works for you. In fact, it affects the whole nervous system. The parasympathetic system which is a system of complete relaxation, only works with narrow pupils. And when the pupils don't narrow all the way, you can never relax all the way.

And something that I don't really understand, but is very fascinating is the aborigines who were in the Australian desert for thousands of years always had good skin and the sun did not bother them. Those who started to wear sunglasses started to get sunburned. It's very interesting. I don't know how to explain the neurology of it, but it is amazing.

So I think that we need to adapt to the sun.

That is one side, the other side is actually important for you because you live in such a great place.

"I'm very much against sunglasses. There is a melanin layer in the retina that darkens the light. The retina has 10 layers. Only one of them is a photo receptor, another one is the main nerve layer, one of them brings you blood, one brings you protection. One of the protections is the fact that the melanin layer darkens the light. If you wear sunglasses, the melanin will migrate and deteriorate..."

Walk, from time to time, at night—hopefully in a group so mountain lions will not get you—where there is no light. We don't truly have night vision because of light.

Even in San Francisco I have a night walk with my training courses, we take a walk in the park, in the darkest place of the park. And at first it looks very dark and then we see that there's actually too much light from the halo of light in the city, but when we go back to the city our eyes are bothered by the light because we preferred the darkness quite a bit.

In your case, I really urge you to walk twice a week at least, if not three times a week, for 45 minutes to an hour. At first you won't see much, but after six or seven minutes, you'll see much more. And after 45 minutes you'd be amazed at what vision you have. And again, don't bring a flashlight, don't use light. Use the stars. Use the moon. And you will find that your vision is getting better, progressively.

So I want you to widen your pupils and I want you to narrow your pupils to bring life to the eye. Our eyes do not have all the life they need.

Another point which is very important for vision improvement is to look at smaller details than the ones you tend to see. I'll regress here and tell



you a little about myself. I was born with cataracts and cataracts are not considered to be a big problem when you have them in your 60s.

In 94% of the cases the doctors remove your lens, they don't cure cataracts. I actually help you to keep the cataracts from spreading. The doctors do not cure your cataracts. What I want to say from a situation of reading Braille and being told that I should not cross the street alone, and definitely not without a cane, to a situation where the Braille that I experience are the bumps on the road, I think that was a huge transition. My vision is not normal—it's

E Y E E X E R C I S E S

Looking at the Distance

Look at an eye chart. Now I want you to look away. Look at the trees. It's 3:11 now; I want you to look until 3:13. What is the purpose of looking? If you look, something has to come out of it. Well, nothing has to come out of it. Looking itself is a very good goal. So just look. You

relax and you look. Great, now look back at the page.

Now, take a look at the first column and visualize that you are putting ink on the letters as if you are drawing and putting ink on the letters. Look at the second column from the same distance. Don't change the distance and look at

the third column. Now look at the fifth and don't change the distance. Close your eyes and say out loud, "The ink is black, the page is white." Open your eyes and look. Look at number six. Do you see the spacing between the words? Do you see the spacing between the lines? Look at number seven. Do you see the

50% of normal vision, it's about 20/80 but it was 20/2000. So looking at details made a very big difference and being able to do it in the strong sunlight and being able to absorb the sunlight was a big portion of my gain.

Now comes the next step which I think is a very important step and this is we need to create coordination between body and eyes. The body forgot to coordinate itself with the eyes in a way that was useful for the eyes. I once had a guy who came to me who had a stroke of his optic nerve because of elective heart surgery and his vision was pretty terrible, it was 20/300.

After massaging him in Brazil his vision improved to 20/60 and then he came to San Francisco to work with me and I worked with him on the trampoline. I taught him to respond to arrows, to jump to one side and clap his hands and jump on his knees and jump to another side etc. And by doing it (eye-body coordination), even though his optic nerve was damaged, he was able to revive the remaining 10% and improve his tunnel vision from 5% to 85% of periphery.

This is an important secret of life that we learn at an early age how to coordinate between the body and the eye. Many of you here are interested in martial arts. One thing I want to say is that martial artists learn the secret of soft eye - an eye that absorbs and doesn't impose from memory to the present. And the reason is you can't really fight three or four opponents if you look at each one of them, it will be too late. So it is absorbing what comes your way. Well, it also has to be done with your computer—you have to absorb the rest of the room and not only look at your computer or you'll lose your tendency to use your peripheral.

Pay attention to your blinking, it should be very soft. Never squint, you should adapt to the sun and look at details. Looking at a distance is relaxing to the eyes. Paying attention to the periphery is relaxing to the eyes. Blinking is relaxing to the eyes. And having a whole new use of the eyes is relaxing to the eyes. That is what I wanted to bring you today. We really need to start to have more sense of the body. ■

spaces between the lines? Ok, look again at a distance, at exactly the same spot you looked before.

(Time elapses.)

Look back at number seven. Now look back at number one. How does one look to you right now? "Sharp," replies one participant.

What we just did is guidance. We learn to look at smaller details so with the larger ones, you keep looking at smaller parts of them. And we use an area which is very precious, the macula. The macula mediates clear, detailed vision and allows you to look at details, small details.

Resilience of the Pupils

Let's work on the resilience of the pupils. Here's what we'll do. First of all, see how clear the letters are in the sun? Now let's close our eyes,

face the sun and move our heads from side to side. Turn your head all the way, 180 degrees.

Next you move your head up and down as if you say yes or say no. Move it up and down three or four times, between the neck and the shoulder. Now move your head all the way from side to side. Look at the page again. How do the letters look right now? "Very clear," responds one participant.

The reason I don't like contacts is in order to adapt to the contacts, you have to suppress your immune system.

"The Long Look" and Sunning the Eye

(The participants have moved to the shade and the next exercise involves following the finger from

side to side and up and down and back to side to side again.)

Twist your leg which means when I'm turning to the left, my right heel comes up and when I'm turning to the right, my left heel comes up. Allow the hip a full rotation. And you blink and you breathe. Now let's go back to the sun.

With eyes closed, move your head up and down and side to side at the same time. So every part of your eye will receive the sun and every part of your eye will rest from the sun. There is a melanin layer in the retina that darkens the light. The retina has 10 layers, only one of them is a photo receptor, there are two nerve layers, but one of them is the main one. You have seven layers that bring you blood, that bring you protection. The melanin layer dark-

ens the light.

If you wear sunglasses, the melanin will migrate and deteriorate and so sunglasses are external protection at the expense of internal protection. For that reason I think it is best to discard them completely and this will strengthen your pupils. (During this brief discussion about sunglasses and protection of the eyes, the participants have been continuing to move their heads up and down and from side to side with their eyes closed.) Now look again at the page. "Whoa!" exclaims one participant

Palming Exercise

All of you are now going to palm your eyes for seven minutes. The benefit of palming is that when you sleep, in order to really sleep well, you've got to dream. The dreams help you wash away the day that passed. Palming is like energy massage of the eyes without massaging them. It's like Reiki, you touch them and you bring circulation. So everyone put your palms on your cheek bones and fingers on your forehead. Breathe deeply and slowly and the palms are being put extremely gently with absolutely no pressure on your cheek bones. Feel that the abdomen expands when you breathe in and shrinks when you breathe out. And chest and

upper back are expanding when you breathe in and are shrinking when you breathe out.

Feel your head; it expands when you breathe in and shrinks when



you breathe out. Feel your palm; it expands when you breathe in and shrinks when you breathe out. Feel your thigh; it expands when you breathe in and shrinks when you breathe out. Feel your knee; it expands when you breathe in and shrinks when you breathe out. Feel your calves; they expand when you inhale and shrink when you exhale. You breathe deeply. You breathe slowly. Some of it you feel, some of it you might not, it doesn't really matter, your thought brings more blood flow to every part of your body.

Now you can visualize that your eyes are black and that you see black. And they are soft and they are moist. You visualize your head is black, that your neck is black, that your shoulders are black.... your

chest and upper back are black. Breathe deeply, breathe slowly. Breathe deeply, breathe slowly and visualize that your back expands when you inhale and shrinks as you exhale. You can take the blackness off your upper body now. Slowly take your hands off your face. Turn on your side and sit up.

There's a concept in medicine that you cannot change anything about cross-sightedness. Well, my eyes are a little cross after I drive as far as I drive, but basically they are not and I must tell you that they straightened quite a bit between the age of 38 and 48.

Peripheral Vision is Relaxation

In the case of looking at the distance, you can have relaxation by looking at the sides (peripheral). The next exercise is wave your hands to the side, wave above, wave below and move your whole body up and down as you wave your hands to the side. The point of waving your hands is to pay attention to the periphery. Stop for a second, do you have a sense of more of the room?

Let me ask you a question and it's not a trick... keep waving your hands to the side to be aware of the periphery. If you keep your periphery, you keep your relaxation. Without the periphery there is no relaxation. (Meir tapes a black piece of paper between his eyes.) Do I look good? I want all of you to have a small piece of paper, medium piece of paper and large piece of paper.

I like when adults can play like children. That's a wonderful thing.

So let's repeat it. Wave your



hands to the side, you look straight, but you wave your hands to the side in any way that you can think about. Now put the small piece of paper on the bridge of the nose. Now wave your hands your side, wave above, wave below and move your whole body up and down. And don't tell anyone you did this. If you've got

any reputation to lose, meeting me makes you lose it completely. This wakes up your periphery. Periphery responds to movement and with the center you look at the still picture.

Now put the medium paper on and repeat the process. Your focus on the paper is a very soft focus and your mind starts to pay attention to what it normally doesn't pay attention to and this is the size of your vision.

Now take that paper off and put the large one on. (Participants

repeat the process. With the large piece of paper on, the participants are instructed to palm.) Tell me is it easy to visualize black now? Because of the black paper it is easy. Breathe deeply and breathe slowly. Open your eyes and wave your hands. Nice, huh?

Now let's put the middle one back on. Continue waving and moving your body up and down. There's more periphery now, isn't there? Close your eyes and move your head up and down—don't wave your hands, but you can imagine as if you wave with your hands and you can imagine a very clear room from all of sides, from the two sides, from above, from below. And you breathe deeply and you breathe slowly.

Now wave your hands again. Now put the small piece of paper.



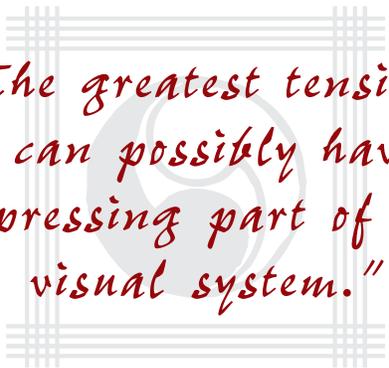
Now move up and down and wave hands. Now the only question I have is does the small piece of paper look small enough? Participants respond "yes." That means your periphery is larger. So you trained yourself to pay attention to your periphery.

Repeat it with the medium one on. Move up and down. Close your eyes and visualize that you are moving up and down and that you can see the whole room really clearly. Breathe deeply. The abdomen expands when you inhale and shrinks when you exhale. You feel that you are breathing in through the front of your body and exhale through the back of your body. Open your eyes and wave again. Now put the large one on, move up and down and wave your hands. You can see that the periphery keeps enlarging, doesn't it? And that is something we all need—more periphery. Rub your hands together and then palm. Now go back to the middle piece of paper, move up and down and wave your hands.

Let me ask you something... do your eyes feel rested as you do this? They really, really rest from the work you've done. Now take the paper off. Nice? Everyone nods in agreement. This is a form of relaxation. I don't even have to explain to you why palming is relaxing. You put the hands around the eyes, the hands nourish the eyes. The periphery, the reason it relaxes is because you are using the part of your visual system that you normally block from yourself.

Two kind of suppression—one is the suppression of the periph-

ery; the other is that often one eye overpowers the other eye and suppresses it. Those two problems are being addressed by the same exercise.



"The greatest tension you can possibly have is suppressing part of your visual system."

Giving Energy to Each Other

Now I want us to give energy to each other. (Meir demonstrates on Janet Gee. He palms her eyes.) If the day is too hot, you can put cold towel over the eyes when we do it. And then what I do is massage her from the nose to the ear, nose to the temples, nose to the ears, and nose to the temple. Go along the cheek bones. We do this to take away the tendency to squint. Until now what I've done to Janet was really gentle, now I'm not as gentle. What I'm doing is feeling the grooves in the cheek bones and I massage them in order to loosen them. And I massage the grooves along the eyebrows to loosen the grooves here. Now I'm holding the forehead and moving the nose from side to side. And then I massage the grooves again and I finish by going nose to ear and nose to temple again. I stroke the eyelids down to stretch them and I stroke the eyelashes, then I finish with a short palming.

Now the participants partner up

and do this to each other.

All We Have Done is What the Body Needs

Childhood vision is 20/15 and is much better than adult vision, even with glasses. What happens is we lose the interest in looking at details. So the important thing is not to look at the end result of how well you see but at the process of what you do with your eyes. First of all we don't pause and simply look at the distance. Now let's talk about another fact,

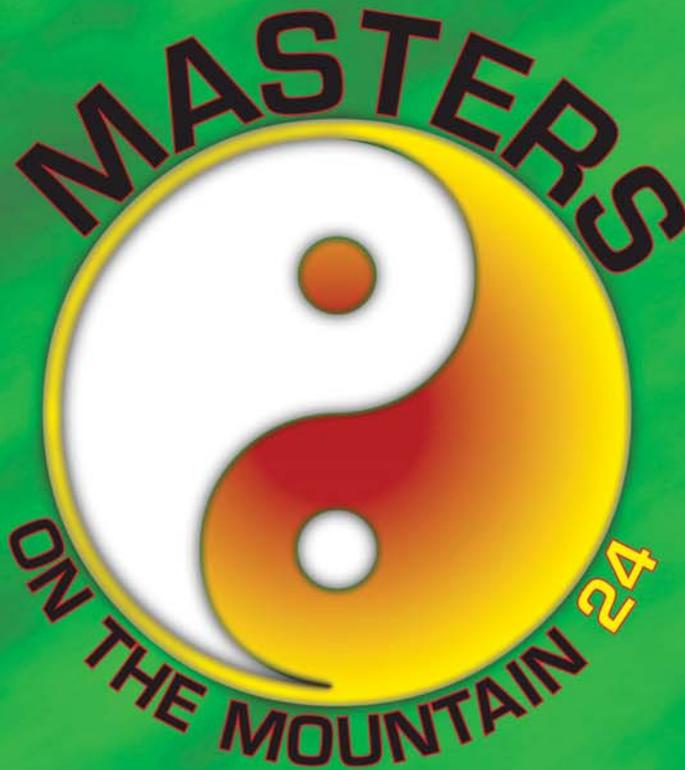
we don't create balanced use of the eyes and we put the eyes under tremendous pressure to see well even though we don't really look well.

We should always blink softly, never squint, adapt to the sun and look at details. Looking at the distance is relaxing to the eyes. Paying attention to the periphery is relaxing to the eyes. Blinking is relaxing to the eyes. And having a whole new use of the eyes is relaxing to the eyes. That is what I wanted to bring you today.

What I have done with you today is all natural. Instead of escaping the sun, we adjusted to it. Instead of avoiding the distance, we learned we could do it and started to use the distance and change the eyes. Instead of not using the weaker eye, we worked on the weaker eye.

Instead of not reading with the weaker eye, we read with the weaker eye. Instead of light being our enemy, it became our friend. All we have done is what the body needs. ■

MASTERS ON THE MOUNTAIN 24



*"Self
healing
is the
ultimate
practice
of the
advanced
martial
artist."*

~WILLEM DE THOUARS
60-year Monkey Boxer

HANDS-ON HEALING FOR THOSE WHO CARE

For health practioners, martial players, Yoga adepts and mountain fanatics

SATURDAY, MAY 12, 2007

Let some of the best bring knowledge from world-wide practice
to your touch, and to your self-healing

FEATURING

COSME CASTIENETO ▶ Grass Valley's own local cosmic master healer from a famous
Hawaiian lineage

MEIR SCHNEIDER ▶ For decades teaching the lame to walk and even the visually impaired
(including himself) to see. The founder of the San Francisco School for Self Healing and
author of seminal books such as Movement for Self Healing.

DARCA NICHOLSON ▶ Will offer her unique Yoga famous in martial arts circles for freeing
powerful, muscle-bound bodies

JANET GEE ▶ Legendary martial arts teacher, health practioner and artist-in-residence at
the Smithsonian, will pass on the agile movement of a tiger in a simple martial form

FRANK BROADHEAD & ROGER SADLO ▶ Will teach the absolute fun and total relaxation
of Feldenkrais martial play

'DR.' STEPHEN WATSON ▶ Will teach the amazingly powerful, ancient meridian line
massage, favorite of great fighters of old.

Free DVD of the day for the first 40 registrants • Sponsored by Sierra Nevada Internal Arts
The same who brought you "health, healing and knife fighting"

▶ **LOCATION:** TBA

▶ **\$75** for the day of your life

▶ **REGISTER** online: www.eurekainternalarts.com, or call (800) 937-3142

V
E
R
T
I
C
A
L
A
X
I
S

