

Q Is television harmful to me eyes?

A When installed and viewed properly, television is not harmful to the eyes or to vision. There is normally much less strain involved in viewing television than in doing close work such as reading or sewing. However, close concentration on the television screen over an excessive period of time may result in general fatigue.

Q Children sometimes like to sit up close to the set – less than one metre from the screen. Will this harm their eyes?

A Picture details will appear much sharper and better defined, and the television lines and defects will be less apparent, if the screen is viewed from a distance that is at least five times the width of the picture. It is known that myopic (nearsighted) children are the ones most likely to persist in developing this habit. Therefore, when such behaviour is noted, a visual analysis should be made immediately.

Q Should you watch television in a dark room?

A No, most lighting engineers and vision specialists recommend that the room have soft overall lighting for watching television. When the room is totally dark, the contrast between the television screen and the surrounding area is too great for comfortable and efficient vision. When the room is softly illuminated, this undesirable contrast is kept to a minimum.

Q Is it better to adjust the television set to the room lighting or the room lighting to the television set?

A It is better to adjust the brightness and contrast of the television picture after the proper room lights have been turned on. Adapt the set to room lighting, not the room lighting to the television set adjustment.

Q How much light should there be?

A A normally lit room, suitable for general activities, is best. Excessively bright room lighting tends to reduce contrast on the screen and 'wash out' the picture. No lights should be placed where glare or reflections will be seen in or near the television screen.

Q Should you wear sunglasses while watching television?

A Generally speaking, the answer is no. Sunglasses shut out too much light for clear vision and, if worn when not needed, tend to make it difficult for the viewer to adapt promptly to normal light.

Q How do colour deficient viewers see colour television?

A Interestingly, colour deficiency is usually not a barrier to the added enjoyment of colour television. The colours on the screen are produced by mixtures of three primary colours (red, green, blue). Mildly colour deficient persons see colour mixtures differently from those of normal observers. Severely colour deficient observers – the 'red blind' or the 'green blind' – see little or no difference in widely different colour mixtures. It is interesting that colour deficiency in women is extremely rare and an estimated five to 10 per cent of men are colour deficient.

Q What does it mean if the eyes water or if there is other visual discomfort while watching television?

A This can indicate a visual problem which needs professional attention. Some viewers should have special glasses to correct their vision for the viewing distance.

Seven rules for television viewing

1. Make sure your television set is properly installed and the antenna properly adjusted.
2. Place the set to avoid glare or reflections from lamps, windows, or other bright sources.
3. Adjust brightness and contrast controls to individual taste and comfort.
4. Have the set at eye level – avoid looking up or down at the picture.
5. Rest occasionally by briefly looking away from the picture – around the room or out the window.
6. Wear your glasses for distance vision.
7. View from a distance at least five times the width of the television screen.

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