



ORTHOPTIST/ORTHOPTICS

This handout was created in collaboration with the American Association of Certified Orthoptists



WHAT IS A CERTIFIED ORTHOPTIST?

A certified orthoptist is a highly skilled healthcare provider. They help kids and adults with eye movement and vision problems. Sometimes, our eyes don't work perfectly together, and that's where an orthoptist comes in.

WHAT DOES AN ORTHOPTIST DO?

All Certified Orthoptists go to college first. Then they do two years of special training. After that they take a test with the American Orthoptic Council (AOC) to become certified.

An Orthoptist works on a team with your eye doctor (ophthalmologist).

They help people with eye problems like:

- **Lazy Eye (Amblyopia):** This happens when one eye does not see as well as the other, even with glasses.
- **Misaligned Eyes (Strabismus):** This is when one or both eyes turn in, out, up, or down.
- **Double Vision (Diplopia):** Seeing two things instead of one.
- **Eye Movement Problems:** Having trouble moving your eyes smoothly.

WHAT DO THEY DO TO HELP?

Orthoptists use different tools and exercises to help the eyes work better together. They might:

- **Suggest glasses:** Sometimes, special glasses (prism glasses) can help eyes focus correctly and work together.
- **Suggest eye patches:** Covering the "good" eye can help the "lazy" eye get stronger.
- **Teach eye exercises:** These are like workouts for your eyes to help them move and focus better together.
- **Use special equipment:** They might use machines with different pictures or patterns to help eyes learn to work together.

Orthoptists can see patients by themselves. But they always talk with the eye doctor (ophthalmologist) about the care they suggest.

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

When your eyes work well together, life can be easier. It can help with reading, playing sports, driving and all sorts of things. Orthoptists help make sure that people of all ages can see clearly and comfortably.

For more information, visit the American Association of Certified Orthoptists website at:

<https://www.orthoptics.org/site/orthoptics-and-orthoptists>

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