

Vision Therapy News Letter



Eye Therapy
Vision Rehabilitation Center

Strabismus and Amblyopia ARE TREATABLE even past age 7

When Tyler was a baby, his right eye turned inwards to such a severe degree that the color of his iris was hardly visible. "I was so embarrassed of (my eye turn) that I tried developing new ways of looking at people so they wouldn't notice my eyes. There were times that I wouldn't even look people in the eyes because I was always self-conscious that they would be looking at my overturned eye."

His parents sought help for their son's vision, and by the time he was in High School, Tyler had undergone three surgeries to correct his turned eye.

Though these brought his eye closer to pointing straight ahead than it had been, it was still quite noticeably turned out. Tyler was plagued by an embarrassment and self-doubt that permeated every aspect of his life. It wasn't until he was evaluated by Dr. Supriya Krishnan that he had ever heard of vision therapy. Dr. Krishnan gave him Sue Barry's *Fixing My Gaze* and Tyler immediately knew he had to find out more about this process. He remembers the book as being "insightful." He had been told throughout his life that there was a critical period for getting his two eyes to work together properly, when in fact Sue Barry's research and own personal experience decries this traditional way of looking at the brain's plasticity as false. "It's kind of like that saying, 'you can't teach an old dog new tricks,'" Tyler notes, "when in fact that's a paradox; we learn new things all the time."

Tyler remembers vision therapy as a learning process of finding activities that maximized his abilities to use his eyes together well. "For me, it wasn't just about alignment, it was all about my vision, from my depth to my peripheral. It's affected everything. The more alignment I got, the more I started getting depth. It brought lots of self-esteem and it gave me a better outlook on life."

Tyler recalls that he had always thought 3D movies were a bit pointless, noting now that it was because he couldn't see the depth in them. However, he remembers the first time he went to see a 3D movie after undergoing vision therapy. "It was outstanding. I felt like a kid in a toy store, seeing different things all around me. I felt like I was the only one watching what was coming at me.

I had never experienced it before. It made me happy that everything I had gone through was actually working!"

Tyler's Story

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When asked what is the primary emotion he associates with having strabismus, Tyler, who is usually thoughtful and deliberate in choosing his words, does not hesitate.

"Embarrassment. Ever since I was little, I was always picked on and made fun of because of it. People would always look at my eyes and ask if I was looking at something else." Tyler also remembers feeling inept at sports when he was younger. His lack of depth perception prevented him from keeping up with his older brother in athletics.

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Meet Dr. Supriya Krishnan, OD, MBA



"Vision therapy changes people's lives, and I love that. I would like to help as many kids as possible."

With her original background in optometry, Dr. Krishnan found that while glasses helped people with many vision pains, they didn't solve everything.

She gives an example, and explains, brain concussion patients who have trouble with

blurry vision and eye tracking need vision therapy - they can't find help anywhere else. I love having that kind of impact on their lives."

Dr. Krishnan's loves seeing remarkable results again and again with her patients in her vision therapy clinic. She has treated adults and children with amblyopia, strabismus, learning difficulties, post-concussion, post-stroke, traumatic brain injuries and sport-related injuries.

When she's not at work, Dr. Krishnan keeps herself busy with her family of three kids. Her goal as a mom: "I try to get my kids out as much as possible and stay as creative as possible."

EYE THERAPY

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Tyler's Story Cont.

The emotional trauma of being teased for a physical condition is undeniably damaging. Often patients with strabismus report an overwhelmingly helpless feeling. They can become excellent avoiders as they hear again and again that their eyes are different or as they see that they are not very good at activities that rely on accurate depth perception. Having gone through a surgery that hasn't wholly solved the problem can exacerbate the helplessness they feel.

Eye Therapy Vision Center seeks to erase that embarrassment and give a person with an eye turn the tools they will need to efficiently use vision in every area of their life. He affirms that despite the teasing and the embarrassing awareness of his eye turn, he did not pursue vision therapy to change how the world perceived him. "I wasn't just doing this to get everyone else's approval, I was doing this for me."

Tyler's experience with vision therapy has fueled in him the desire to become a developmental optometrist himself and to, one day, treat kids just like him who have struggled with an eye turn.