

Eye Sense: Common Sense Adaptations for Living with Low Vision

Article submitted by Diane Gunson, ASID, Certified Aging in Place Specialist of First Impressions LTD Interior Design. For more information, contact Diane at 303-738-9384 or visit her website – www.firstimpressionsdenver.com

Whether you are sighted or experiencing partial loss of vision, the principles of glare control, contrast enhancement, and consistent proportion of furnishings play a big role in the safety of your environment.

Imagine you are in the room you use the most, and notice where the light comes in the window. Looking at the window may be uncomfortable because too much undirected light is coming toward your eyes, so turn your back to the window, and enjoy the warmth from the sunbeams.

Give your eyes time to adjust when walking into buildings from outdoors by pausing until you can see images more clearly. The muscles in your eyes just take more time to focus than they did when you were younger. Most senior communities provide porch awnings and entry benches just for this reason.

Arrange your furniture so your computer, TV, or framed artwork is on the opposite side of the room from the windows. Place your bed on a wall at right angles to the window so the light washes over your bed, and plan to wake up with your back to the window to give your eyes time to adjust to the morning light. For example, if your window is on the south, place your bed on the east or west wall. If your window is on the west, place your bed on the north or south wall.

Be careful when entering rooms where a window lines up with the entrance to the room. Direct your gaze below the window, and talk away from the window as soon as possible. For your home, tinted sunshades that filter the incoming light, or draperies in mid tone fabric, will soften the transition between the wall and the window. White draperies or sheers can actually increase glare, so consider tinted alternatives.

Select fabrics for your furniture either several shades lighter or darker than the floor. If the furniture has a wood frame such as a dining chair, select a fabric either lighter or darker than the frame. Clear patterns with strong contrast are easier to distinguish than multi-color tapestries.

Be consistent with proportions in your furniture and lighting. A chair with a seat height around 20” high and a seat depth around 20” is easiest to navigate. Scroll arms on chairs have multiple angles to support you while getting in and out of the chair. Organize as many of your favorite articles of daily living at mid height on a central table or lazy susan. Tables with rounded edges are easier on your knees.

Check the height of your tables and lamps, and make their combined height approximately 60”. Soften glare by directing light up towards the ceiling instead of down on a surface where it could bounce in your eyes. Always use shades on chandeliers, and choose black shades when you want to focus the light.

About the Author:

Diane Gunson ASID - First Impressions Ltd – www.firstimpressionsdenver.com - Telephone: 303-738-9384

Diane Gunson, ASID has over thirty years of experience as an interior designer in Denver. From mountain retreats to urban condominiums, boardrooms to retirement homes, she brings her aesthetic sense to projects in Arizona, Washington, Cordillera, Beaver Creek and all front range communities.

Credentials:

2003 CAPS Certification - ADA universal design

2002 Color Marketing Group - color forecasting for the auto, advertising, and home furnishings industry

www.CaregiverClassDirectory.com Featuring *“National Caregiver Class Directory”*

1988-04 Who's Who in Interior Design

1984 ASID Chapter Secretary

1981 NCIDQ - National Council for Interior Design Qualification #3499

Independent agent of Howard Lorton, Inc.

© 2011, All Rights Reserved by Diane Gunson ASID - First Impressions Ltd

Posted on www.CaregiverClassDirectory.com, Sept-Oct 2010

File Name: ARTICLE_eye_sense.doc