How Can People With Low Vision Get More Out of Life?

Vision rehabilitation can help individuals live more safely and independently, even if they have a visual impairment that is not correctable with standard glasses, contact lenses, medicine, or surgery. People should ask their eye care professional about how to make the most of their remaining vision and how to continue to perform everyday activities.

Many Americans with low vision have difficulty reading mail, shopping, cooking, and watching TV. The challenges associated with vision loss can seem overwhelming at times and may result in feelings of anxiety, frustration, or depression.

Vision rehabilitation cannot restore vision to the normal range, but it can help people make the most of remaining vision.

Eye care and vision rehabilitation professionals can help people find information and support for coping with low vision. Vision rehabilitation services—programs, devices, and technology—help people adapt to their environments and learn new ways of doing things to improve their safety, independence, and confidence. Most importantly, vision rehabilitation services can help people with low vision maintain their everyday activities and to continue to enjoy life.

Vision rehabilitation combines training, counseling, and visual and adaptive devices to teach skills that can give people with low vision the confidence to function as independently as possible by maximizing their remaining sight. Vision rehabilitation provides people with support and skills to deal with vision loss, advice on how to travel safely, tips for taking care of their homes and themselves, methods for continuing to work, and ways to enjoy leisure activities.

The positive impact of vision rehabilitation can be enormous. Visual devices such as high-powered glasses, magnifiers, and telescopic lenses can make it possible for people to once again read street and bus signs, books, magazines, and medicine labels, and to cook, shop, watch TV, and more.

Adaptive devices such as audio and large-print clocks, timers, calculators, remote controls, watches, and reading material make it easier to relax and enjoy recreational activities. A support group of other people with low vision can also be a source of practical solutions, support, and friendship.

It's your vision. Make the most of it.

For more information on vision rehabilitation, visit the Healthy Vision 2010 Website at www.healthyvision2010.org, sponsored by the National Eye Institute (NEI) and the Healthy Vision Consortium.

The NEI conducts and supports research that leads to sight-saving treatment and plays a key role in reducing visual impairment and blindness. The NEI is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.