



MOVE



BALANCE



SEE

Foundations of Neural Performance Training





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Peripheral Awareness

Objective:

Understand peripheral, or ambient, vision.

Goals:

- Execute simple peripheral awareness drills to improve your peripheral awareness, reduce pain, improve movement. Following the drills re-assess your peripheral vision and how you feel walking.
- Determine whether each drill is either performance or rehab, or results in no change during reassessment.

Materials:

A safe place to walk, a letter ball, and you may want to have a chair, wall, or other support for balance and assistance to control the third exercise.

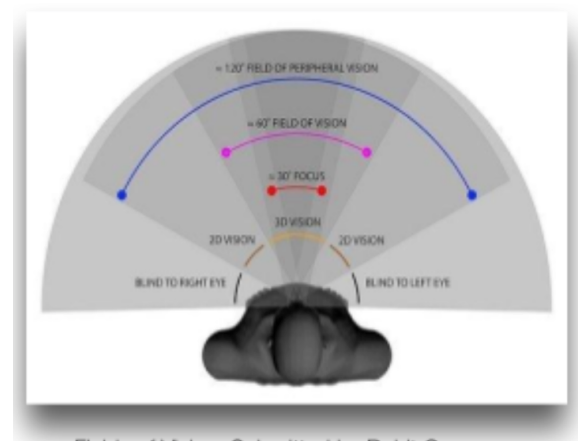
Set Up:

You can use any vision, balance, or movement to assess and reassess the drills. Peripheral vision or any other vision assessment can be good to test during this training.

Description/Discussion

I'm sure you have heard the term peripheral vision — the things we see around us without looking at them. You may not have thought that much about it before. I hope to change your opinion and convince you that peripheral vision (we will call it ambient vision) can significantly affect your ability to move through your environment and how you 'feel' when you do.

We use the terms foveal (instead of focal) vision to describe what you are looking at directly. We use the term ambient (instead of peripheral) to describe what you are not looking at directly. Think of vision as, not only what you are seeing, but the processing, tracking, and decision-making that goes along with it. Our visual system can be complex because there is so much happening around us and the amount of brain 'space' used for processing visual information. Studies show vision provides 70% of all sensory input to the brain. Our foveal (focused) vision includes only about 6 - 15 degrees around the point we are focused. Our ambient (peripheral) vision extends out to 120 degrees (both eyes) and past 180 degrees total. So, our ambient vision incorporates 2 - 6 times our foveal vision. No ambient vision would be like walking around looking only through a paper towel tube. With that in mind, can you understand how important ambient vision can be to your daily life and movement through your environment?



Fields of Vision; Submitted by Rohit Grover on Quora.com

The first step in training this is through peripheral awareness. The following drills will help you begin to explore your peripheral vision by building a better 'feel,' or awareness of your surroundings.

Peripheral Awareness Drills

1. Peripheral walking. In this drill, you simply begin to pay attention to what you can and cannot see as you walk. When walking in a safe environment, look at a point in the distance. Then as you look at and walk toward that point, try to notice other things around you without moving your eyes. Understand you will not always see details, but you can still 'detect' stationary and moving objects.
2. Letter ball tossing. Stand in an area where you have some open space (ex. on or near a basketball court) and toss a letter ball up a foot or so and catch it. While focusing on the letters on the ball, try to notice other things around you. If you're near a basketball court for example - the backboards, other elements in and around the court, and movement of other people, if present. This a good challenge and if you can repeat this and reassess in the same environment, you may notice that you are aware of greater details over time. To progress this drill, try walking while tossing the ball.
3. If you have been through the balance lessons, you may be aware of the VOR-C. (If not, I will try to explain it.) Stand with one hand out in front of you with your thumb up. Focus your vision on your thumb and move it from side to side. As your ambient vision tracks around your environment try to pick up large bits of information — while still focusing on your thumb. You can make the motions big or small and fast or slow as you build up greater peripheral awareness. Next try moving your thumb up and down, and then on diagonals. Finally, fully rotate your hips and upper body (keeping your feet in the same area) to make the movement much larger and incorporate more movement.

Lessons Learned

1. Do you have a greater understanding of your peripheral (ambient) vision?

2. Do you see the importance of greater ambient vision? What is it?

3. Did you find any of the peripheral awareness drills helped you to gain a greater awareness of your environment without directly looking at it? Use examples.

4. How did you reassess after some peripheral awareness training?
