

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

Is Trading Killing My Eyesight?

SCREEN TRADING'S march to the mountaintop has brought with it many undeniable benefits: market efficiency. Better technology. No longer having to share pit space with that guy who showers only on the vernal equinox. But are all those profitable hours spent squinting at a monitor coming at the price of your vision? Are you doomed to spend your dotage being led around by a slobbering guide dog and reading *Trader Monthly* in Braille?

Not to worry, says Dr. Kent M. Daum, a professor at the University of Alabama School of Optometry in Birmingham. "Computer use doesn't cause disease, infection or eye inflammation," he says. "It's simply uncomfortable." Nor, happily, will it progressively ruin your eyes any faster than normal aging will. (Note: As of press time, there was still no known cure for normal aging. Sorry.)

But blurred vision, headaches and dry eyes aren't just a nuisance; imagine how ruined your day would be if you were, say, an oil trader whose oracular fogginess led you to go long canola instead of crude. (Hey, it could happen.) Blame high-tech gadgetry, which evolves faster than

humans do: "The visual system's focusing mechanism works by seeing a sharp edge," Daum says. "Screen images are softer than those on paper, so it's harder for the eyes to focus." Your baby blues also function less well when you're reading straight ahead (as with your screen at work) than when you're reading downward (as with *Clifford the Big Red Dog* on the beach in Aruba).

It's nice to know that making money won't also make you blind. But how best to help your exhausted eyeballs? Get regular examinations. Position your screen just below eye level. Be wary of natural light whose glare makes screen fuzziness worse. And use eyedrops — though not ones that promise simply to de-redden, Daum notes. They constrict blood vessels — great for teenage potheads on their way home, bad for actually lubricating the eyes. (Try Refresh or Systane drops instead, he advises.)

Should problems persist, ask your doctor about Restasis, a prescription eye-wetter. If all else fails, that should help. Which will enable you to accurately spot position moves (and soak in the wisdom of *Trader Monthly*) for clear-eyed decades to come.



THE VISION THING: "Your eyes are fine, sir. Incompetence explains your lousy trading."



TEST DRIVE

MARKET BAUBLE

Can a New Age titanium necklace reduce traders' stress?

IF YOU'RE LIKE US — hypercompetitive, chained to the market and as stressed as Michael Moore's knee joints — you're a trader who yearns for the laser-like focus and calm of someone fearless. Someone cool under fire. Someone like, er, B-list pro golfer Tom Pernice Jr.? The folks behind the Q-Link sure hope so.

The Q-Link, a 1.5-inch pendant, claims to "tune up your biofield" by putting you in harmony with your "human energy field." (We've always used cough syrup and Pink Floyd LPs for that, but to each his own.) It's marketed mainly to golfers — Pernice, supposedly not a paid spokesman, regularly raves about it — but its partisans include such eminences as Madonna and Mick Jagger.

Impressive. But how stressed can Mick Jagger really be? In our opinion, no one needs Q-Link more than the average angst-knotted trader.

Thus, we draped the necks of an AMEX clerk and an AMEX broker — statistically valid samples being difficult to assemble on the Curb floor — and sent them into the fray for a few days. The shocking results? "I felt nothing, no better or worse," said the clerk, 32. "I'm not much of a meditator. Maybe it's different for others."

Or maybe not. Our broker — a healthy, if tense, 26-year-old — also reported no extra energy. No doors-of-perception insights. A biofield as off-tune as George Soros at a karaoke bar. And performance no better than on days unencumbered by New Age gimcracks. Pernice can gush all he wants. When he shoots 59 at St. Andrews (or the Stones make a decent album again), we'll reconsider. Until then, when we're stressed? Hey, that's why God created single-malts.

\$99-\$300. qlinkgolf.com

WRITERS: CRISTINA VELOCCI (DOCTOR'S ORDERS); HILARY LEWIS (TEST DRIVE); THE IMAGE BANK (DOCTOR AND PATIENT)

TRADER TICKER

10 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ANNUAL EYE-DOCTOR VISITS, IN MILLIONS, AMERICANS MAKE AS A DIRECT RESULT OF WORK-RELATED EYESTRAIN

18 NUMBER UNDER PAR TOM PERNICE JR. SHOT IN TWO PGA TOUR-TURNAMENTS IN 2006, HIS BEST PERFORMANCES OF THE YEAR

12 NUMBER OVER PAR PERNICE SHOT AT THE U.S. OPEN IN JUNE, HIS WORST PERFORMANCE OF 2006