

## Glassworking-related Dry Eye Relief

As we age, our eye mechanisms age with us. Moreover, on occasion, dry eye issues can crop up as well. As a group working with hot glass, we are additionally exposed to hot air plus air movement created by any ventilation we are using. Age + heat + air movement = pretty much everything needed for a good case of dry eye syndrome.

Note: I am not a doctor, nor do I claim to be one, nor do I play one on TV, the movies, or the internet. However, I HAVE talked with thousands of glassworkers like you and from time to time they all experience episodes of dry eye syndrome that cannot be medically explained.

Here is the consensus of what seems to work for most people:

First and foremost: **BLINK YOUR EYES**. The brain will override the blink reflex when you are working on very small intricate work. You have to consciously override your brain and blink. The best way to remind yourself to blink is to make a sign for the back wall of your work area. Make it big, on white paper. Use a black marker and write the word **BLINK** on it. Don't put anything else on it. Write **BLINK** in large letters. Place it in your visual range at the back of your work area.

Get some good quality branded **SALINE ONLY** eye drops. **DO NOT USE MURINE!! DO NOT USE HOMEMADE SALINE!!** Murine and other similar products reduce the red in your sclera (white of the eye) by constricting the blood flow through the surface blood vessels. Homemade saline will contain bacteria and other harmful crap. Use only pure, sterile saline drops from a brand-name manufacturer. At the start of your glassworking session, put at least two drops in each eye, then blink several times to lubricate your eyes. During your session, take "safety breaks" every 45 minutes to an hour and repeat two drops in each eye, blinking afterwards. If you feel your eyes "drying out," stop and add more drops. At the end of the session for the day, after you have safely shut down your work area, wash up, including your face and hands, then put two more drops in each eye.

If the dry eye symptoms still continue after this, you may have an underlying medical issue and I strongly encourage you to visit your local eye-care provider.

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