

How to Get Started With Sports Vision Training

Our story

Our practice, [Hope Vision Development Center](#), is a vision therapy-only practice. As a mother of a child with learning-related vision problems, my main focus was on helping those struggling learners. Initially, the decision to add sports vision training was to increase patient motivation and ultimately improve vision therapy outcomes.

Vision therapy isn't always fun for patients—especially for the preteen boy who doesn't care about getting better at reading and "hates" school. What I noticed was if we added activities to help them get better at sports, and we called it "training" instead of "therapy," their chances of successfully improving their visual skills for academics were greatly improved.

Now, when a patient comes to our office for the first time and sees sports equipment and technology, their attitude instantly changes and they are eager to be here. In fact, it was so fun that we decided to begin offering sports vision-related services as a separate entity from our [vision therapy practice](#).

What is sports vision training?

The [International Sports Vision Association](#) defines sports vision as the science of helping athletes reach peak levels of performance through the enhancement of visual skills. There are many articles on sports vision specific to screenings, enhanced vision examinations, specialty eyewear, and visual skills training. The focus of this article will be incorporating sports vision training into your vision therapy or optometric practice.

How to get started with adding sports vision training to your practice

Sometimes, getting started can be the hardest part. I started my vision therapy-only practice cold, without having completed a residency or having worked at an office that offered vision therapy. Then, I made the decision to incorporate sports vision.

There are three main aspects to starting a sports vision training practice:

1. Education
2. Space & Equipment
3. Marketing

Educating yourself on sports vision training

Education is your first step. What helped me stay on track was to block time in my schedule for consistent study in the office and at home. In addition to reading books, I began to collect articles on sports vision and placing them in a binder for reference. Check out [Insights into Sports Vision](#) by Optometric Management. This is a new series with practical and applicable tips for implementing sports vision into your practice.

Next, I committed to attending meetings and seminars. Here is a list of a few upcoming meetings and seminars offering education in sports vision training and vision therapy:

- [The International Sports Vision Association \(ISVA\) Annual Conference](#)
- [College of Optometrist in Vision Development \(COVD\) Annual Meeting](#)
- [Optometry's Meeting \(AOA\)](#)
- [The Neuro-Optometric Rehabilitation Association \(NORA\) Annual Conference](#)
- [Optometric Extension Program Foundation \(OEP\) Clinical Curriculum](#)

Now there are several online training options available like the following:

- [Performance Vision Academy by Sports Vision Pros](#)
- [AOA's Sports & Performance Vision \(SPV\) webinars](#)
- [The Sanet Vision Seminar Series Education Module by Binovi Academy](#)
- [DIGIVision Media online video recordings of COVD, ISVA, and NORA meeting lectures](#)

Also, we found that Youtube, Facebook, and Instagram are great resources for new activities. Finally, we continue to network and consult with others who have already added it. Doing so will help you see and experience the many ways sports vision can be incorporated into your practice.

Personally, I found that the process of becoming board-certified in vision development, vision therapy, and vision rehabilitation with the [College of Optometrists in Vision Development](#) (COVD) was essential to my understanding. I highly recommend the [fellowship process](#) to any optometrist looking to specialize in visual skills training.

Space and equipment needed to get started

Free space or open space is much more effective for those looking to do sports vision training. Our current open space is 24 feet by 16 feet. If you do not have the space inside your office, consider offering offsite training at another location. We recently launched [Sports Vision Lab](#) as a separate entity that will allow us to offer sports vision training services off-site.



When it came to our equipment purchases, we were very budget-conscious and only invested in one major piece at a time. We already had most of the basic equipment you would expect in a vision therapy office. All [major equipment purchases had to have a realistic plan](#) to be incorporated into our existing system. We slowly began adding sports-related vision therapy equipment as a way to motivate patients and make vision therapy fun for them.

Our first Sports Vision Training specific equipment was the [Senaptec Tablet](#). We found the assessment, training, and reporting features to be very user-friendly. Next, we added [RightEye](#) for the eye-tracking technology to expand our sports vision assessments. We plan to add [NeuroTracker](#) and [Binovi Touch](#) shortly. These technologies are used by top professional sports organizations and they have research to show how their technology produces results.

If you haven't already, I suggest the [Bernell](#) catalog as a reference for many of the products on the market in the area of Sports Vision Training and Vision Therapy.

Here is a list of equipment we either currently use or have plans to purchase shortly. Again, start small and grow at your own pace.

High Tech

- [Senaptec Tablet and Sensory Station](#)
- [RightEye](#)
- [FITLIGHT Trainer](#)
- [Senaptec Strobes](#)
- [NeuroTracker](#)
- [Binovi Touch](#)
- [Sanet Vision Integrator \(SVI\)](#)
- [Computer Orthoptics \(VTS4\)](#)

Low Tech

- [Hart Chart](#)
- [Brock String](#)
- [Marsden Ball](#)
- Translucent Eye Patch
- [Flippers](#)
- Yoked Prism Glasses
- Red/Green Glasses & Red/Blue Glasses
- Red/Green Bars
- Vectograms
- Rotator
- Space Fixator
- Metronome
- Balance Boards
- Walking Rail
- [HecoStyx](#)
- Dynamic Rings
- Juggling Balls
- Tennis Balls

- Pitch Back

Most of our patients were involved with sports at some level already. To get more practice and experience with the new equipment we started slowly incorporating it into our vision therapy practice as a “reward” and our patients loved it. It made vision therapy fun!

Marketing—getting the word out

[Marketing](#) is essential when it comes to building a patient base. Here are four ways we are marketing our Sports Vision Training services.

Internal Marketing

Internal marketing is what you would do inside your practice.

1. Educate your staff on what sports vision services you offer, how these services will help the athlete, and how they can get started.
2. Update your patient intake or history form with sports related questions.
3. Add sports and sports vision-related graphics and displays in your office.

External Marketing

External marketing encompasses all the [activities done outside your practice](#).

1. Local newspaper articles
2. Team Sponsorships
3. Banner signs at sports facilities
4. Team screenings

Web-Based Marketing

Web-based marketing is all the marketing that you do via the internet.

1. Consistently update your website and social media with Sports Vision Training text and images
2. Facebook and Instagram ads are a great option for promoting your practice
3. Build an email list offering a workshop to demo your services

Regarding content for your social media, I have found it best to just document what you do. What is just another day for you is new and interesting to your audience.

Referral Marketing

Referral marketing is all about building relationships with other professionals.

1. Always communicate back any time you receive a referral. Be sure to comply with HIPAA regulations
2. Emails/newsletters communicating your services and how they help
3. Personal meetings such as office visits, demos, and lunches will build a personal connection

Again, we only started marketing externally when we were comfortable with our ability to provide services. Focus on the basics first and expect to always be learning as you go through the process of adding sports vision training to your practice.

And finally, go for it!

Sports Vision Training is now a major part of our vision therapy practice. This year alone we have participated in screenings, examinations, and training with athletes at the amateur, college, and professional levels. This opportunity has allowed us to meet with and learn from other optometrists, therapists, trainers, and coaches. I've found that we all share the same

passion: to help our athletes perform to their maximum potential.

If you are looking to add Sports Vision Training to your practice, start by educating yourself, then slowly add equipment, and finally, get the word out! You know more than you think and the demand for these services is growing. There has never been a better time than now to get started.