

# Scanning

When you scan, you look from one object to the next using search patterns. Here are some patterns and ideas that can help you find an item, avoid an obstacle, or complete a task.

## Techniques

- Horizontal (left-to-right) patterns can be used for tasks like reading or doing crossword puzzles. This technique can also be helpful if you had a stroke or eye injury that affected your peripheral or outer side vision.
  - Start at the upper left of the area you're scanning. Scan to the far right, and then slightly drop your gaze down. Then steadily move back to the left. Drop your gaze down again and scan to the far right. Repeat this technique until you have searched the entire area completely.
- Vertical (up-and-down) patterns can be used to locate the buttons on an elevator, for example.
  - Start at the upper left of the area you're scanning. Search down, like you're following an invisible beam. Slightly move your gaze to the right, and follow the beam back up. Repeat this technique until you have searched the entire area completely.
- Move your head and eyes to search a specific area in the environment. Use landmarks to locate specific places like your favorite coffee shop.

**continued...**

Repeated practice is important when learning to use search patterns. With practice, you'll improve your visual scanning skills. Start by standing still in your living room or kitchen, for example, to practice visual scanning. After you are confident using search patterns, include movement: Walk around your home or community.

## Activities to Practice

- Visit your local library. Search the shelves for books using a low vision device, such as a monocular.
- Find food items on kitchen and pantry shelves.
- At the grocery store, read a nutrition label to find the amount of sodium in a food item.
- Read a prescription label to find the dosage or the number of refills.
- Complete crossword puzzles, or play Scrabble with family and friends.
- Put together a picture puzzle.
- Play Solitaire, putting the cards on a table. Or play it on the computer.
- Read a restaurant menu to find sections or categories of different types of food.
- Read a bus schedule to find out when the bus arrives at a certain stop.