

# How-To-Do-It Briefs

## Microscopy Doesn't Have to Be a Headache

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Students often have difficulty when first using monocular microscopes. Squinting to block out distracting light often leads to headaches, complaints and a negative attitude about microscopy.

We have discovered a simple and inexpensive solution to this problem: the eyepatch. Covering one eye with a patch while looking through the microscope with the other can make using a microscope more enjoyable with minimal discomfort and distractions (Figure 1).

Eyepatches are inexpensive and are readily available through pharmacies and surgical supply houses. Have students keep these eyepatches in their dissecting kits. Tell them not to share them to prevent transmission of contagious ocular diseases.



Figure 1. Todd Millen tries out his microscope using an eyepatch.

**Todd Millen**, a graduate of Hamden Hall Country Day School, attends the University of Vermont, School of Natural Resources as a forestry major. He originally thought of the idea for the eyepatch. **Barbara R. Beitch** teaches life-science courses at Hamden Hall. She obtained an A.B. from Indiana University, earned her Ph.D. from the University of Virginia, and did post-doctoral ophthalmological research at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, before coming to Hamden Hall.

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### Editor's Note:

HOW-TO-DO-IT Briefs are a new addition to *The American Biology Teacher*. If you have laboratory ideas that are too short to be put in an article but are still good enough to share, send them

to: Dan Wivagg, Associate Editor, Dept. of Biology, Baylor University, Waco, TX 76798. Ideas don't have to be lengthy to be helpful to other biology teachers!

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