



VISUAL SYSTEMS™

TRACETHE8s™ is an activity that can assist in integrating, enhancing, and refining a large variety of skills. The progressive challenges presented on these 10 charts lead the individual/client/student through a series of learning experiences that are entertaining, arousing, and fun.

TRACETHE8s™ is a fun, engaging, therapeutic activity designed to enhance:

- visual-motor skills
- visual-perception skills
- attention and focus
- working memory
- laterality
- oculomotor skills
- scanning skills
- figure ground skills
- eye-hand coordination
- sequencing skills
- speech
- brain integration

■ ORIGINS ■

John Wallis is credited with introducing the infinity symbol in 1655 in his *De sectionibus conicis*. The infinity symbol is also sometimes depicted as a special variation of the ancient *ouroboros* snake symbol. The snake is twisted into the horizontal eight configuration while engaged in eating its own tail, a uniquely suitable symbol for endlessness.

The infinity sign, modified in the Brain Gym® program as the “Lazy 8,” has been used in developmental optometry and many other disciplines to develop eye tracking skills, encourage midline crossing, enhance letter formation, and foster left/right brain communication. **TRACETHE8s™** has taken this concept to a whole new level by increasing the number of 8s and incorporating shapes, letters, numbers, words, and spaces into the design.

■ HOW TO USE TRACETHE8s™ ■

This series of charts may be used in a variety of ways. Starting with chart **1a**, the simplest, the student learns the basics of the activity. By starting in the middle of the design, the dry marker is moved up to the left around the smallest ring, through the middle and up to the smallest ring to the right, and around to complete the pattern. Each successive ring is followed in the same pattern. Of course, it may be necessary at first to simply use a finger to trace the **8**, to provide hand over/under hand, or simply have the individual watch as you perform it. After completing the smallest/first entire **8** pattern, the individual continues through the middle and begins the same process for the next **8** pattern. It is intended that the chart be placed with the “X” of the **8s** lining up with the bridge of the client’s nose to encourage crossing the midline. It may be placed in other positions if the desire is to foster a particular visual field. The process is usually initiated using the dominant hand, then the non-dominant hand and, finally, both hands to trace the patterns. Further, the client should be encouraged to track with his/her eyes only, not by leaning the head or body in any direction. The charts may be used as a table-top activity, on the floor, seated, prone, supine, or best, in a standing position. Attaching the chart to a cork board, wall, or other surface can be easily accomplished by using push pins through the corner holes punched in the laminate. You may want to use Velcro for attachment purposes as well. The four directional arrows in the lower left corner of the charts indicate that the charts

may be used in any orientation (vertical, horizontal, upside down, etc.). Initially, the charts should be used in the most easily recognizable orientation (that is, horizontal); as the individual progresses, he/she can be further challenged by changing the position. The charts are a progression of complexity, ending in chart **3d**, which has spaces allowing the individual to create his/her own chart. The open spaces of the other charts are intended to provide an opportunity for enhancing the skill of visual closure. You may want to create a “shield” to block vision of several of the rings or to modify it for specific individuals.

The most basic pattern of tracing is starting with the smallest of rings and working one by one out to the largest. It may be necessary to stay with this pattern and charts **1a** and **1b** for a period of time until the client becomes familiar and “trained” in the process. Tracing is intended to be done slowly, fluidly, and with a fair amount of accuracy.

However, it is important to note that “fun” is always a large component of learning.

■ SUGGESTED VARIATIONS ■

- **As the charts begin to include letters, shapes, words, numbers, and spaces, ask the individual to say each item out loud as they pass by it.**
- **To develop scanning skills, just point to a shape, letter, number, or word as instructed.**
- **Color a particular shape, number, letter, or word as instructed.**
- **Change chart position.**
- **Change student position (i.e. sitting on a ball, standing on one leg).**
- **Start from the largest and go to the smallest ring.**
- **Use a different color in each hand, tracing the smallest rings on both sides, and then switching hands to trace the next ring.**
- **Skip a ring, 2 rings, and so on.**
- **Use a toy race car to move around the 8s.**
- **Add up the numbers in a ring.**
- **Ask how many shapes/letters/numbers/words are in a ring.**
- **Ask the client to verbalize only numbers, letters, shapes, or words.**
- **Draw all the left sided rings beginning with the smallest, and then move to the right side of the diagram starting with the largest ring.**
- **Find all the rhyming words.**
- **Each time you finish a ring on both sides, switch the color of the marker.**
- **Skip an item (letter, shape, number, word).**
- **Use both hands simultaneously on either side of the pattern.**

The above are just a small sampling of possibilities. Please feel free to play with your creativity.

■ CARE/MAINTENANCE ■

Simply use the supplied Dry Erase Markers (or any of your choice); wipe off laminate with the supplied eraser. The laminate works just like a white board.

It is recommended to clean the charts right after use, as this helps to prevent shadowing. If residue builds up, clean with regular isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol.