



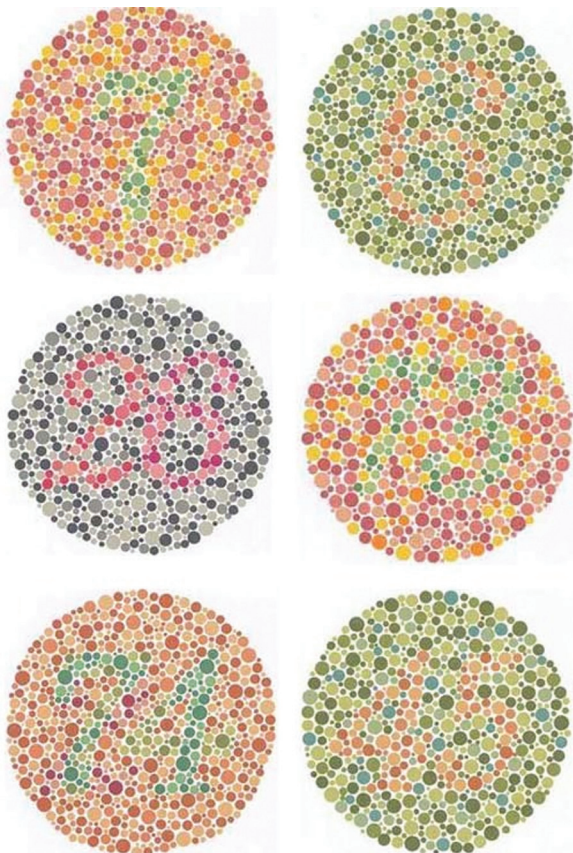
## Color-blindness, muscle spasms

Professional truck drivers have a unique set of health issues. Here are some recent inquiries, and some of you will relate.

***I am color-blind. None of my doctors have ever tested me. Will that keep me from passing my DOT physical now?***

Color-blindness is really a color deficiency and not blindness. The problem is the X chromosome. Males have one and females have two. Having only one X chromosome is responsible for men having more color-blindness than women. Why? Females have two X chromosomes and the likelihood of both carrying the color-blind trait is rare.

So, can they take your CDL because of color-blindness? Yes, it is possible, but not likely. Most people adapt to the colors as they see them. In particular, a driver must be able to distinguish the colors of a traffic light or warning light.



In our exam rooms, we make sure we have these colors around the room so we can point and say what color is this? I have never had a failure. Most color-blind folks adapt in their early years and somehow overcome this problem.

***I have muscle spasms in my legs frequently, and it's a killer when I am driving. I try to extend my leg or move it to get some relief, but sometimes I have to stop the truck and get out and walk around until it goes away.***

Muscle spasms can be really painful. Those that occur in the calf are usually because of overuse and are common with truck drivers. My first suggestion is that you move the seat up closer to the pedals and use a different part of the foot to flex forward.

But if you choose to see a physician, you should first do a little ergonomic evaluation. Is it your right leg or left? Is it lower or higher? Spending so many hours behind the wheel is likely the culprit, but you need to determine whether it is the accelerator leg or the clutch leg.

Do your leg cramps occur during a period that the cruise control is off or in heavy traffic? These facts will help your doctor determine the cause and suggest a remedy.

Do you ever have them when you are walking? Cramps that occur with walking can be vascular. This is known as peripheral arterial disease, or PAD. So make sure you've evaluated yourself completely before seeing a physician about it. Your answers to the doctor's questions will be important.

If none of these describe your situation accurately and your charley horses have no rhyme or reason, try a banana a day to replace your potassium, and add a couple of Tums for a bit of calcium. **LL**

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