

Extraocular Muscle

Extraocular muscles are the **six skeletal muscles** that control **eye movement** and one muscle that controls **eyelid elevation**. These muscles allow the eye to move in multiple directions with precision and speed.

List of Extraocular Muscles

- **Medial rectus** – adducts the eye (moves it toward the nose)
- **Lateral rectus** – abducts the eye (moves it away from the nose)
- **Superior rectus** – elevates, adducts, and intorts the eye
- **Inferior rectus** – depresses, adducts, and extorts the eye
- **Superior oblique** – intorts, depresses, and abducts the eye
- **Inferior oblique** – extorts, elevates, and abducts the eye
- **Levator palpebrae superioris** – elevates the upper eyelid (not involved in eye movement)

Innervation

- **Oculomotor nerve (CN III):**
 - Superior division → superior rectus, levator palpebrae superioris
 - Inferior division → medial rectus, inferior rectus, inferior oblique
- **Trochlear nerve (CN IV):** superior oblique
- **Abducens nerve (CN VI):** lateral rectus

Function

These muscles coordinate to allow:

- Horizontal gaze (medial + lateral rectus)
- Vertical gaze (superior/inferior rectus and oblique synergy)
- Torsional (rotational) movements of the eyeball
- Binocular alignment and smooth pursuit of targets

Clinical Relevance

- Lesions of the nerves innervating these muscles cause:
 - Diplopia (double vision)
 - Ophthalmoplegia (paralysis of eye movements)
 - Ptosis (drooping eyelid) if levator palpebrae superioris is affected

See Also

- [oculomotor_nerve](#)
- [trochlear_nerve](#)
- [abducens_nerve](#)
- [cranial_nerve_palsies](#)

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