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Life through a lens

Advances in spectacle lens technology have transformed the appearance and performance of glasses in recent years. The days of **metal frames and glass lenses are long gone**, as are visible horizontal lines across bifocal lenses. Today, it's hard to tell what prescription strength lenses contain simply on appearance, due to advances in materials and manufacturing.

As we get older, our eyes struggle to switch quickly between viewing objects at different distances. For patients over forty, varifocal lenses provide sharp and well-defined vision at various distances, with no obvious seams between different lens compositions.

Similarly, you'd struggle to identify someone needing a high index prescription, thanks to lens-thinning technology and lightweight materials which fit into a larger array of frames.

The advanced technology used to produce digitally surfaced lenses can fully adapt each lens to that eye's precise visual needs. It's possible to incorporate a variety of lens coatings, offering benefits from UV protection to blue light reduction.

The blue light emitted by computer/smartphone screens can affect sleep patterns, and reducing it is important – **especially if you're in the habit of using phones or laptops at night**. Other coatings repel water, grease, scratches and dirt.



We're happy to recommend frames that complement the lenses that will optimise your vision

Dry your eyes

Meibomian glands in the eye lids are the secret weapon against impurities and contaminants. The lids distribute oils from the glands across each eye to lubricate and cleanse its surface, and we're normally unaware of this whenever we blink.

Occasionally, there isn't enough lubrication to cover the tear film across the surface of each eye. We might struggle to generate enough tears, or the tears may evaporate too quickly, resulting in a common condition known as dry eye syndrome.

Symptoms include itchiness and grittiness, blurred vision and light sensitivity, while your eyes might feel uncomfortable or start to sting. Occasionally, an affected eye will overcompensate by producing too many tears, resulting in watery eyes.

Anyone can develop dry eyes, but tear production may be affected by other medical conditions. It's more likely to occur if you're over fifty, wear contact lenses or work in dry and dusty conditions. Smoking and drinking increase the risk, as can some medicines. Ongoing exposure to air conditioning is a common factor in dry eyes



developing, as is spending lengthy periods in front of a monitor.

If you're concerned about developing dry eyes, ask one of our team for advice about reducing your risk factors. We may recommend moisturising eye drops, or offer tips on taking regular screen breaks and using a humidifier to moisten dry air.

We may also be able to identify potential causes such as eyelid problems, since our optometrists can inspect your eyes in great detail with specialist equipment.



Age shall not bleary them

When we're born, our eyes spend a couple of years rapidly developing before our vision stabilises. Yet our eyes continue to develop as adults, with significant changes in vision occurring from middle age onwards.

Our eyes become slightly less responsive around the age of forty as their lenses become less flexible, making it harder to focus. This is a condition known as presbyopia, and it's often characterised by needing reading glasses, or struggling to read close-up text. Everyone experiences presbyopia to a degree, though regular eye tests are vital to ensure it's developing at a normal rate.

In our sixties, we face a greater risk of developing cataracts, glaucoma and/or age related macular degeneration (AMD). These are the three biggest risks to vision in later life. Exposure to UV light can increase the risks of cataracts and AMD, while a healthy diet and plentiful exercise reduces the likelihood of developing any of these diseases.

Certain conditions can be triggered by specific risk factors, with some long-term medications or high blood pressure potentially leading to glaucoma or macula problems.

Optic nerve damage occurs if the build-up of pressure inside the eye isn't treated, yet glaucoma is painless and often hard to self-diagnose. It's more likely in patients with underlying health issues like diabetes or people who are short-sighted (Myopic), while it may also be hereditary.

It's important to schedule regular eye tests at any age, but especially so as we get older. This is the stage in life when conditions such as age-related macular degeneration are most likely to happen, and rapid identification is key to us making a successful diagnosis.

It also ensures we can equip patients with the knowledge to make lifestyle changes or pay close attention to changes in their vision.

Our trained optometrists can perform specialist tests for age-related eye conditions. By monitoring your eye health over time and intervening if new conditions emerge, we can help minimise (or even halt) any further sight loss.



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Top tips for wearing contact lenses

Contact lenses come in a variety of forms, from soft daily disposables to hard reusable lenses. Whichever option you choose, these tips should ensure your lenses are comfortable and effective at all times:

- **Always handle with clean hands.** When removing disposable lenses, clean and dry hands to prevent impurities coming into contact with your eyes.
- **Insert lenses before applying skincare products.** Once inserted, you can safely apply make-up, or moisturiser/suncream (avoid around the eyes).
- **Give the lenses a moment to settle after insertion.** Ensure each lens fits comfortably and provides sharp vision before going about your day.
- **Always use fresh saline to rinse lenses.** Tap water isn't sterile because it contains microbes which can contaminate lenses or cases. We sell impurity-free saline solutions.
- **Only clean reusable lenses with recommended solutions.** Don't use these solutions beyond their expiry date, and replace lens cases regularly to prevent germ build up.
- **Wear non-prescription sunglasses.** Even contact lenses with UV filters don't provide total UV protection, so sunglasses are advisable in bright conditions.
- **Consider multifocal contact lenses.** Older patients might benefit from multifocal lenses which offer support at near and far distances alike.
- **Invest in eye drops.** Eyes can feel dry while wearing lenses. We stock eye drops, which keep your eyes hydrated and comfortable.

Regular eye tests will allow our optometrists to recommend the optimal lens prescription