

Life Without Glasses

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To be free of glasses is the passionate goal of many people. For some it is attainable, for most it is not. I hope in this series of articles to educate you on your options to improve your vision. Eventually we all need glasses. You might think we all value vision equally. It's not true. One person may have vision correctable to 20/20 but drive with legally blind vision because they are too vain to wear glasses. Another will wear Coke bottle thick glasses to read fine print but would wear binoculars if they had to. A teenager with 20/20 in one eye and 20/25 in the other wore glasses to get 20/15 vision, better than 20/20. That teenager is called Valedictorian.

I will start with the oldest vision correction, glasses. The routine use of sophisticated glass prescriptions has only been available for a little over 100 years. One reason is that routinely living past the age of 45 years is a relatively recent development. Glasses are extremely versatile. You can have Sunglasses, Reading glasses, Golf bifocals, Computer glasses, trifocals, progressive glasses, and hunting or shooting glasses. There are further specialty glasses for safety, sport, and one of the rarest, Double D's. Double D's are specific for Commercial Airline pilots and Finish Carpenters. Both need to see very well above and below and most are over 40. It is a glass with a reading segment on top and on the bottom.

Some definitions and descriptions: If your vision is 20/40, this means that the smallest letters you can see at 20 feet can be seen by someone with good vision at 40 feet. If you are near sighted it means your vision is better at near than at distance. Far sighted means your vision is better at distance than at near. You may need glasses for both far and near but it's which one is better without glasses. Astigmatism is not a disease. It is that the shape of your eye is slightly oval instead of being a perfect sphere. Almost everyone has some degree of astigmatism.

Your glass prescription is a combination of Near or Far-sighted along the power, usually between 0.25 and 20.00 in 0.25 steps. The amount of astigmatism is usually between 0.25 and 8.00 in 0.25 steps along with the angle from 0 to 180 in 1 degree steps. The fitting of that prescription into a glass frame is dependent upon a whole other set of calculations. We have all seen people with dents in the skin in the side of their face. The frame isn't wide enough. Some people have dents in the skin by their nose. Their glasses are heavy. Usually these problems can be corrected with proper sizing of the frame. Some people have their skin stained by their glasses. The Nickel in the metal is staining their skin. A different metal can help. Fitting the lenses into the frame so that the lens centers on eye is yet another calculation. Most of us do not have symmetrical faces so the center of the lens is different on each side of the frame. There needs to be room for the reading segment below the center of your eye on each side. That is another calculation. Your prescription is a result of the addition of the front curve of the lenses with the back curve of the lens. Many different combinations can give you the same prescription. Unfortunately, if these curves are changed significantly from your old lenses, you may have trouble adjusting to new glasses. If you go from small to large frames, you may be uncomfortable. Most people prefer small frames. The single most important factor in the comfort of a frame is the weight.

Glasses are easily the most versatile option to correct your vision.
Next; contacts for everyone!

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