

The Ultimate Sunglass

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Sunglass weather is year-round in Florida. I will describe the most common options you have when picking out a pair of sunglasses. The most important feature that all sunglasses should have is an ultraviolet filter. Ultraviolet light has been associated with cataract formation and macular degeneration. We know ultraviolet light causes skin cancer and the delicate eyelid skin is a common site for skin cancers.

The next most important feature is a polarized lens. Polarizing cuts the glare. It cuts the glare off the road, other vehicles, your car's hood and windshield. Its greatest help is during a Florida sun shower where the road is wet and the sun is still shining. Almost all boaters wear polarized sunglasses. I would also suggest an antireflective coating, including the backside of the lens. The antireflective coating on the backside of the lens absorbs "bounce back" glare and reduces eye fatigue.

Another glare reducing feature is a mirror finish to the lens. However, some people associate mirror finished lenses with motorcycle gangs. What color should your lenses be? Brown or amber provide the sharpest vision. Many people, however, prefer gray or green lenses. How dark your lens color is depends on personal preference. As a rule of thumb, the lighter the color of your eyes, and the older you are, the darker you will want your lenses.

The most neglected feature of sunglasses is called the wrap. Sunglasses that wrap around the side of your face are more effective than standard flat sunglasses. No one looks directly at the sun, so with flat sunglasses and your head turned, half the sunlight may be going around your sunglasses, directly into your eyes.

Photochromatic lenses are a popular sunglass. These lenses automatically turn dark in the sun. The most common brand names are Photo-Gray and Transitions. Continual improvements have made them lighter weight, change color faster, turn darker outside and are clearer indoors. They all turn color from ultraviolet exposure. A weakness is that they do not turn dark in a car. The windshield of your car blocks the ultraviolet light. If you have this type of sunglass, you may need clip-on sunglasses while in your car.

Sunglasses come in many forms—ones with no prescription, prescription sunglasses or clip-on sunglasses. Some sunglasses fit over the top of your prescription glasses. These are often worn after eye surgery. The least known, but very effective sunglass, is a wrap-around sunglass to which you can clip your prescription lenses. This allows you to have prescription wrap-around sunglasses.

The ultimate sunglass, in my opinion, has an ultraviolet filter, polarized lens, brown tint, a mirror finish and wraps around your face. For you, the ultimate sunglass is the ultraviolet filtering sunglass that you will wear. Remember, to see your best, you will need your prescription in your sunglass.

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