

YOUR EYES IN YOUR 40s AND BEYOND

What you need to know



Struggling to read the newspaper? Using a larger font size on your phone? Difficulty reading when the light is poor? This is normal for people in their 40s and beyond. Read on to find out about looking after your eyes.

MAKING EYECARE **CLEARER**

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STRUGGLING TO READ THE NEWSPAPER? ARMS NOT LONG ENOUGH? USING A LARGER FONT SIZE ON YOUR PHONE?

This is normal for people in their 40s and beyond and is due to a condition called presbyopia. Presbyopia affects your ability to see things close up. It happens when the lens inside your eye lose flexibility.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU HAVE PRESBYOPIA?

Symptoms of presbyopia can include:

- Headaches and eye-strain
- Difficulty in seeing objects that are close up
- Blurred vision when the light is poor, or when you are tired
- Having to hold things at arms-length to see them better

PRESBYOPIA - WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

There are muscles which control the flexible lens in each eye. This allows you to focus on objects at different distances. As you become older, your lenses become hardened and close focusing becomes more difficult.

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

Presbyopia can normally be diagnosed in a routine eye examination, where an optometrist will check your ability to adjust your focus to different distances. The eye examination is also an important check for the health of your eyes.

The optometrist will ask you about any symptoms you may have noticed, such as difficulty in reading in low light, eye-strain or headaches. They will also ask you about your medical history

Depending on your medical history and age, the optometrist may also check for other conditions such as glaucoma (changes in pressure inside the eye) and retinopathy (small changes at the back of the eye which can be due to high blood sugar). They will also examine the macula for early signs of changes leading to macular degeneration.

Further vision checks will then discover what spectacle lenses may be needed. These are prescription specs, commonly known as reading specs. A dispensing optician (DO) can help you choose the right frames and lenses so you can see clearly again.



WHAT HAPPENS OVER TIME?

As presbyopia is an age-related condition, it will develop as you grow older. This means that the strength of your prescription lenses may increase, so it is important to have regular eye-tests. Most people need an eye test every two years, and your optician will advise if you need to be seen more often.



You may also need a prescription to help you see better over longer distances, such as for watching TV or driving. This might mean that you need another pair of specs. For convenience, you may choose to combine both pairs of specs into one with bifocal or varifocal lenses. Contact lenses may also offer a solution. Talk to a DO about your options.

WILL WEARING SPECS MAKE MY EYES WORSE?

No. As presbyopia is caused by the hardening of the lenses, wearing specs will not make your vision worse. You may notice that when you take your specs off things seem blurry as you miss the improved vision you enjoyed whilst wearing your specs.

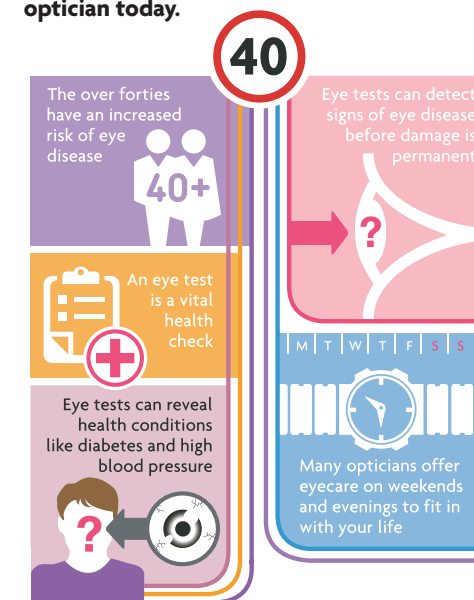
CAN I USE READING SPECS BOUGHT FROM A SHOP OR ON-LINE?

Ready-made reading specs are available from various outlets, and may give visual support, but not as accurately as prescription specs.

WILL WEARING READING SPECS HELP ME WHEN USING COMPUTERS & SCREENS?

Yes, your DO will advise you about the best solution for specs in the office, the kitchen or for use in your workplace (sometimes known as occupational lenses).

Whatever your concerns, the DO is here to help. A DO can answer questions about eye care, spectacle frames and lenses, contact lenses and much more. Talk to a dispensing optician today.



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THE DISPENSING OPTICIAN

A dispensing optician (DO) advises on, fits and supplies the most appropriate spectacles after taking account of your visual, lifestyle and vocational needs. DOs also play an important role in advising and dispensing low vision aids to those who are partially sighted as well as providing advice to parents and dispensing spectacles to children. They are also able to fit and provide aftercare for contact lenses after undergoing further specialist training.

YOUR SPECTACLES

You can choose whether you get your spectacles from the practice where you had your eyes tested, or whether you would like to look elsewhere. Shopping around can save you money, but staying with the same practice can make it easier if any problems arise. Discuss your work and leisure activities with the DO and they can recommend the best eyewear for you.



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Association of British Dispensing Opticians