



glasses direct

Understanding your Prescription
from the world's largest direct glasses retailer

- How to translate your prescription to enter it online
- What do the Axis, Sph and Cyl mean?
- How to include reading additions
- Your pupillary distance and how to get it
- and more...

Your Prescription

Your prescription is the most important part of buying your glasses online - it's what enables us to custom-make each pair. But it can be difficult to understand everything written on it (you're not alone). So, to help you get to grips with your prescription, this section will take you through the various parts and explain what to look out for.

"Remember that if you do not feel happy deciphering your prescription, you can always post it or scan and email it to us and we'll take care of it for you."

[the glasses direct way](#)

Your prescription will generally be laid out something like this:

	Sph	Cyl	Axis	Add
Right	-1.25	-1.00	120	+2.5
Left	-1.50	-0.50	110	+2.5

OR

	Right	Left
Sph	-1.25	-1.00
Cyl	-1.5	-0.50
Axis	120	110
Add	+2.5	+2.5

Or if you have an NHS prescription, like this:

Right	Sph	Cyl	Axis	Prism	Base	Distance	Sph	Cyl	Axis	Prism	Base	Left	
	-1.25	-1.00	120										
	+2.5						Near						

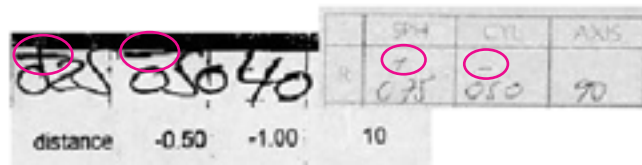
Let's explain what all of these measurements mean.

SPH or SPHERE:

Sphere: ALL prescriptions have one of these. This indicates the strength of your prescription in 0.25 increments.

At Glasses Direct we only sell glasses to people with a SPH prescription up to +/- 8. We choose not to produce the very strong prescriptions beyond this range because they need extra-accurate fitting which we feel is best carried out by your optician.

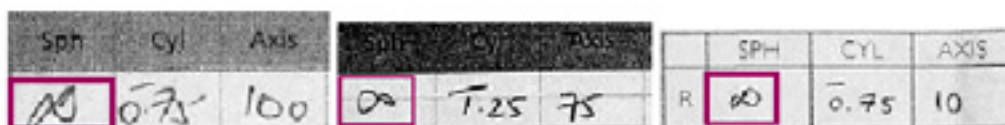
Often the +/- sign is written above the number



The most common mistake in the prescriptions is selecting the wrong sign, so please double check this.

It's sometimes written without the full stop. For example - as 175 rather than 1.75.

In this box you may also see the following signs:



This is quite a common sign and looks like an 8 on it's side and stands for 'infinity'. Sometimes 'PL' is used instead. You should enter 'infinity' or 'plano' for that part.

Your Prescription

CYL or CYLINDER:

This figure is required if you have something called an 'astigmatism'. It should be a number between +/-4, in 0.25 increments. Again, the +/- is very important and is sometimes written above the number.

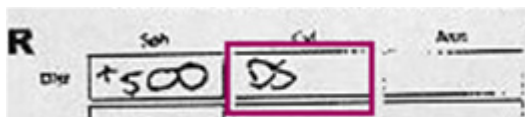
It is usual for the cylinder value for both eyes to be the same.

If you have an axis reading on your prescription then you should have a cylinder reading.



These prescriptions say -0.50, opticians often leave out the decimal point, and put the minus above the number.

Sometimes opticians write 'DS' in this column. This simply means there is no astigmatism, and you can enter either nothing (leave the column blank), or select the phrase DS in the drop down. This is sometimes misread as O5 (see example).



AXIS:

If you have a cylinder reading on your prescription then you should have an axis reading. It will be a number between 0-180.



If you have a numerical value for 'cyl' then you MUST have a value in this box. These prescriptions have an axis value of 40 and 90

Not all prescriptions have cyl/axis values. And you may have it only in one eye. In the example below there are no cyl/axis values in the right eye



ADD or NEAR ADDITION:

The addition value is the amount to add to the sphere (SPH) value for reading or intermediate glasses and sometimes for computer work. Sometimes opticians write the addition as a complete additional line on your prescription. In the example above this would show SPH as +4.00.

Please make sure you write the correct Addition (ADD) depending on whether you have requested Reading or Intermediate (for VDU use) glasses.

If you have requested bifocal glasses please make sure you enter your ADD measurement as a separate reading in this box.

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ADD or NEAR ADDITION (continued):

Opticians write this all over the prescription, sometimes once (same for both eyes) sometimes once for each eye.

This prescription has an Add of +2.75, which should be put in for both eyes.

	R	Sph	Cyl	Axis	Prism	Base		Sph	Cyl	Axis	Prism	Base	
R		+1.00	-2.00	83		-	Distance	Net 4-0251150 x 80					
I							Near	(Balance) 6/36					
G													
H													
T													

Balance lens

This person has an Add of +2.00, which should be put in for both eyes

	R	Sph	Cyl	Axis	Prism	Base		Sph	Cyl	Axis	Prism	Base	
R		+2.50	-1.00	70		-	Distance	+2.50	-1.00	110			
I							Near	+2.00					
G													
H													
T													

Other items which may be found on your prescription:

BALANCE:

This is written when there is little or no vision in one eye, and the optician wants to make sure that the lenses match weight and thickness for cosmetic reasons.

	Sph	Cyl	Axis	Prism	Base	
Distance	Net 4-0251150 x 80					
Near	(Balance) 6/36					

Balance lens

It may be that you only have a sphere measurement, and this is absolutely fine. You may however have numbers written in some of the other boxes. The cyl & axis are related values and always appear together. If you have a 'cyl' then you should also have an 'axis'.

6/36 MARKINGS:

(see example above)

These are another indication of how good your vision is, and is useful for an optician, but is not needed to make your glasses.

PRISMS:

Prisms are used in glasses generally when people have a slight squint or lazy eye.

You should enter your prisms information into the extra information box, with the prescription.

Your Prescription

PUPILLARY DISTANCE (PD):

In order for a pair of glasses to perform optimally, the frames need to be made to match the distance between the customer's eyes so that the centre of each lens is aligned with the center of the customer's pupils. To achieve this we need your "pupillary distance measurement" or "PD measurement", i.e. the distance between the pupils of your eyes. Unfortunately, many prescriptions given by high street opticians do not include a PD measurement as standard. They will certainly have it on record if they have made you glasses before so there's no reason they shouldn't provide it to you on request.

"If you would prefer not to ask for your PD, Glasses Direct can make your glasses using an average pupillary distance measurement based on a survey carried out on 4,000 people which works very well for most customers. However certain customers who have strong prescriptions and whose pupillary distance diverges significantly from the average, may experience problems with spectacles made using an average PD measurement. The spectacles will not damage or harm the eyes but they can cause discomfort or eye strain. If you do experience difficulties using your glasses, please contact us and we will either arrange for your pupillary distance to be measured and then replace your glasses, or give you a full refund."

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