glasses direct™

A clearer guide to understanding your vision, opticians and glasses

Did you know?

- **85% of people don't understand their eye prescription.**
- **57% of people have never questioned their eye prescription.**
- **Nearly half (44%) of people feel under pressure to buy glasses from the same place they had their eye test.**

This information may vary due to continuing research.

Crystal Mark 19462
Clarity approved by Plain English Campaign

What is this leaflet and how does it help me?

We, Glasses Direct, have teamed up with Plain English Campaign to provide you with a short, clear and helpful leaflet to print off and take with you in your pocket or handbag when you next visit your optician. You will find all the important information you need to make sure, you find the perfect glasses.

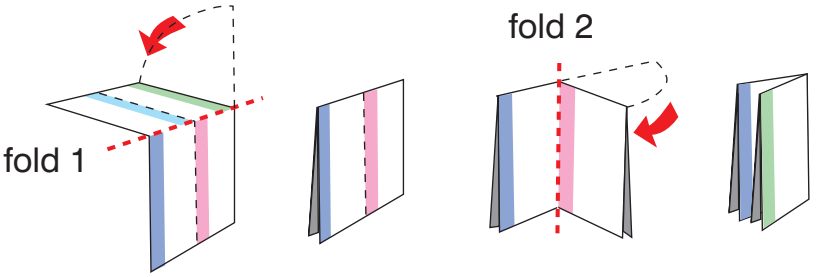
The pocket guide includes

- top tips;
- information on your optician and what do they do;
- information on what you are paying for; and
- information on what your prescription means.

What do I do?

1. Make sure your print page is set to **100%** (actual size – A4).
2. Switch off '**reduce to fit to print area and margins**' in the print set-up menu to give you the best results for folding the leaflet.
3. Print off **all three** sheets.
4. Fold the leaflet – sheet two – along the dotted lines labelled '**fold 1**'. Next, fold along the dotted lines labelled '**fold 2**'. See the diagram below.
5. Pop the leaflet into your pocket or handbag when you next visit the optician for your eye test.
6. Keep the other two sheets at home in case you need them in the future.

Print your own pocket guide



Tip

For best results, print at **100%** and **switch off** '**page scaling**' or '**reduce to fit print area and margins**' in your print set-up.

Who are opticians and what do they do?

If optometrists are like your doctor, dispensing opticians are like the chemist that provides you with your medication.

- **Optometrist** (four years training, five in Scotland) – Your **eye doctor.** They carry out your eye test and are responsible for the health of your eyes.
- **Dispensing optician** (three years training) – They give you your glasses and can provide expert advice on glasses and lens options. They also fit contact lenses in some cases.
- **Optical assistants** (little formal training) – Many high-street opticians have these to provide much of the advice. They should always get permission from the registered optician before they place your order.

fold 1

Your prescription and what it means

1. The **spherical** number – This shows whether you are short-sighted (-) or long-sighted (+) in each eye. A higher number means a stronger prescription.
2. The **cylinder** number – This will be negative or positive and measures the amount of astigmatism you have.
3. The **axis number** – This will be between 1 and 180 and describes the angle of the curve in your eye.
4. If you have a muscle imbalance in your eye, your optician will prescribe a prism and base. The prism is written in fractions and the base shows the direction of the prism in the lens (for example, up or down). This is uncommon so the boxes are usually empty.

Ask the optician for your pupillary distance or PD (the distance between your eyes measured between the centre of your pupils). It is more important for higher strength prescriptions where the lens needs to be centred more accurately.

Usually your PD is not on your prescription, so you should ask for it if you want to buy glasses elsewhere.

fold 2

What are you paying for?

Frames

- Although some styles are better suited to smaller faces and others to larger faces, most people need little or no adjustment for a frame to feel comfortable.
- Most frames are made in just a few places around the world, so whether you buy on the high street or online, the frames were probably shipped from the same few factories.
- The quality of materials, the hinges and finish are a small part of the overall cost of the glasses. More money is spent on the brand. You can buy high-quality fashionable frames at fairly low prices if they are not a designer label or brand.

Lenses

- Lenses are made by a small number of companies around the world, and only a few in the UK. So, whether you buy your glasses online or on the high street, it's likely that they will have been made by the same people.
- Virtually all lenses are made from optical plastic of different strengths, which are shown by its index. The higher the index, the stronger your prescription and the thicker your lenses will be.
- For strong prescriptions, opticians will recommend thinner lenses which are more expensive, but always remember that **you have a choice.**

Top tips

1. By law, opticians must give you a copy of your prescription after you have an eye test.
2. You can buy your glasses anywhere – you don't have to get them from where you had your eye test.
3. Ask your optician for your pupillary distance.
4. By law, if you use a computer at work, your employer must pay the cost of your yearly eye test.
5. Many companies offer eye-test vouchers or discounts. Check this before you pay the full cost of an eye test.

glasses direct™ **pocket guide**

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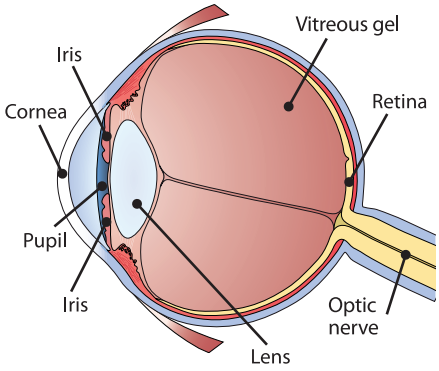
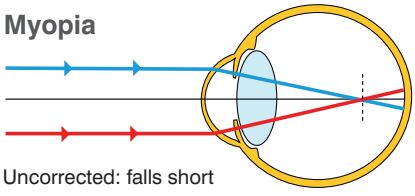
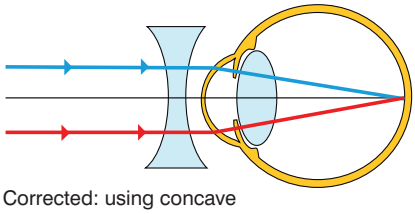
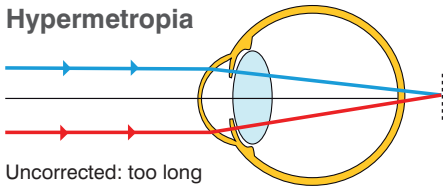




Uncorrected: falls short



Corrected: using concave (inward-curving) lenses



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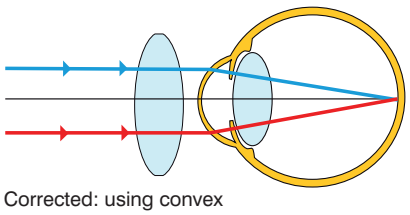

Corrected: using convex (outward-curving) lenses

Definitions

Astigmatism – This is when the front part of the eye (cornea) is the shape of a rugby ball instead of a regular circle. This causes your vision to be blurred.

Bifocals – A lens with two parts (one for seeing things at a distance and the other one for seeing things close up).

Cataracts – A clouding of part of your eye called the lens. This causes your vision to be blurred.

Glaucoma – This is when the optic nerve is damaged (sometimes caused by an increase in eye pressure).

Hypermetropia – This is known as long-sightedness and is when the eye is too weak, too short or the material within the eye is less dense than normal. This makes it difficult to focus on objects that are too close to you.

Myopia – This is known as short-sightedness and is when the eye is too strong, too long or the material inside the eye is too dense. This makes it difficult to focus on objects in the distance.

Macular degeneration – Sometimes the delicate cells of the macula become damaged and stop working. If this happens later in life, it's called 'age-related macular degeneration' (AMD).

Nystagmus – This is when the eyes move uncontrollably, usually from side to side.

Phoria – This is a muscle imbalance that could cause double vision.

Presbyopia – This is when the the eye can no longer focus on close objects. It usually happens when someone is around 45 years old. This is why you need reading glasses.

Pupillary distance (PD) – The distance between the centre of your eyes. This is more important the stronger your prescription is.

Retinal detachments – This is when the retina is weakened by a hole or tear, which allows fluid to get underneath, weakening the attachment so that the retina becomes detached. Your vision becomes blurred and dim.

Photokeratitis – This is when your cornea is burnt by ultraviolet rays of light from the sun. This tends to happen when you are very high up and in areas of snow, where the light strongly reflects upwards. Symtoms include your eyelids being red and swollen and you will feel as though you have grit in your eye.

Single-vision lenses – Lenses that have only one use or power.

Varifocals – Lenses with more than one optical power.

Ultraviolet (UV) light – Invisible light found in sunlight. UV light can damage your health, which is why most people use protective suncream. It can also damage your eyes, so it's worth checking that your sunglasses completely block UV light.

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