

Contact Lenses and Presbyopia

As you become older your ability to focus at near distances becomes poorer. This affects spectacle and contact lens wearers as well as people who previously did not need glasses at all. Our 'Presbyopia' fact sheet provides more information about this process. Contact lens wearers have four options to consider.

1. Revert to spectacle wear

This may seem a strange recommendation in a contact lens brochure. However, for short sighted people who can read very well unaided and who do a lot of close work, it is sometimes more convenient to go to work with spectacles and remove them for near and computer work. One alternative (below) is to put reading glasses over your lenses. This is not very convenient and it may be easier to wear varifocal spectacles as you simply put them on in the morning and leave them.

2. Near Spectacles over the contacts

From our point of view this is certainly the easiest solution. But this does not mean it is the best solution for you! It can be extremely inconvenient constantly putting reading glasses on and off; think about shopping or looking at watches and mobiles. However, patients who only read for leisure may find this option the best.

3. Monovision Contact Lenses

This option can be successful. In this technique the dominant eye is left fully corrected for distance and the non dominant eye is corrected for near. The type of lenses worn are not changed, just the power of the reading lens. The compromise is the patient is made monocular with only one eye for accurate distance vision and one for near. Not everyone succeeds with this technique and we would always have a trial for at least a week to ensure success.

4. Multifocal Contact Lenses

Sometimes these lenses are described as Bifocal or Varifocal contact lenses. These terms are used simply to describe the fact they allow you to see both at distance and near. They do not work the way spectacle bifocal or varifocal lenses work. They are certainly becoming more popular than the monovision technique because you have both eyes doing the same thing at the same time. Available as Bespoke lenses, monthly, fortnightly and daily disposables we can invariably fit these to your lifestyle needs.

Costs

Please read our 'Contact Lens Price Policies' leaflet to understand exactly what you are purchasing.

Briefly, charges include;

1. Professional time to fit the lenses and check your suitability.
2. Professional Aftercare with 'Medical Optometrists' on hand.
3. Access to care - our policy dictates there is always a clinician present during opening times; an emergency number for out-of-hours access is also available if required.
4. Access to Medical, Independent Prescribing, Optometrists with advanced training to be able to treat eye conditions independently (this is not within the skills of most optometrists or opticians).
5. The actual contact lenses.

Trials

Trials for contact lenses, particularly multifocal and monovision lenses, can be time consuming. Bespoke lenses often need refinements in fit before the correct lens is found. Disposables too require time. If the target lenses do not work adequately then slight refinements in power can help. If each lens is tried and tested before success is achieved a trial can take several visits. Some opticians are reluctant to suggest these options because they do not think they are cost effective and are not willing to put in the time commitment. This is letting down both the patient and the profession. Multifocals do not always work for everybody, just as varifocal spectacles are not always successful.

Hindsight is invariably great. We are not always able to predict who will be successful and who will not. However, the process is still important for the patient. If they are not suitable for you then at least we have tried and we can tick the box and move on to other options. Either way the process is important.