

Looking Good, Seeing Well, Feeling Great

Good vision plays a vital part in almost every aspect of life. Thanks to today's exciting ranges of quality eyewear - both glasses and contact lenses - you can enjoy all the benefits of clear sight, at the same time enhancing your appearance or making a fashion statement. Make the right choice and you'll feel great - about the way you look and the way you see!

Fabulous in frames

Spectacles are in vogue as a fashion accessory. Both men and women have realised that glasses can make all the difference to the way they want to look and the image they want to create. The fantastic choice of styles and colours now available means you can choose different frames to co-ordinate with clothes and other accessories and you can use frame shapes to highlight your best features.

For example, close-set eyes can be countered by a thin or clear bridge, while wide-set eyes can be drawn together visually by a thicker or darker bridge. Long noses look shorter in frames with a low-set bridge. In general, the top of frames shouldn't go above the line of your eyebrows or the effect will be to make you look permanently surprised. The shape of your frame should compliment your face shape, not duplicate it. The best frames will suit your looks whether you dress up or down.

Comfort is just as important as appearance. When you buy new glasses your optical practitioner will make sure that the width of the frames, the length of the sides and the fit round the ears are right for you, but make sure you choose a style where the lower edge of your frames clears your cheeks and can't rub or irritate your skin.

So how do you go about choosing?

Your eyecare practitioner will gladly spend time with you when selecting your frames, helping and advising over the ones that look best and suit your lifestyle. Some practices even have computer screens that enable you to see how you look in certain frames. Ultimately, the choice has to be yours, but here are a few useful pointers on choices for different complexions and face shapes:

Pale complexions

Try lightweight metal frames or those with a hint of colour such as rose or amber. Tortoise shell frames can look extremely good on some fair people as long as they are not too dark, but avoid clear crystal frames as they are too colourless for most pale complexions. Blue or green tinged frames also tend

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to drain colour from cool cheeks.

Dark complexions

People with olive, Mediterranean, golden or Asian skin and rich black hair often look stunning in silver, gold or clear frames. Also try burgundy and brown colours, but black can be too heavy.

Black skins

All metallic frames suit black skins. Amber usually works well too, but black is either wonderful or awful, depending on style. Be careful with colours - they rarely contribute to overall style unless they're bright, fun and specially chosen to work with a specific outfit.

Oval faces

An oval face has a slightly wider forehead than jaw, well balanced and softly rounded. This face can look good in just about any frame, but try angular or rounded aviators (not large, old-fashioned ones).

Round faces

For faces that are short and fairly wide with full cheeks and a round chin, choose slimming styles. Slightly elongated shapes work well as long as they are not too shallow, while square, or even up-swept styles can help to highlight the upper face. Avoid small and round or very large shapes that make the face look even rounder.

Heart-shaped faces

These faces have a small, neat chin and mouth, tapering up and out to a broader forehead. Frames to try include delicate, rounded or squarish styles. Avoid heart-shaped styles that echo the shape of the jaw.

Square faces

For faces that are strong and angular, or short and wide, the best frames to try are round or oval styles that soften the jawline. Avoid any shapes that emphasise squareness.

Long faces

These are faces with high cheek bones, a deep forehead and a strong or chiselled jaw line. Try wider frames that counteract the face's narrowness. Frames with a strong top line or rounded 'owl' styles can work well. Avoid small, square styles.

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Flattering lenses

As well as giving you clear vision, modern lens designs and materials make a big contribution to the smart appearance of today's spectacles. Highly advanced plastics have meant that lenses can be made thinner and lighter than ever before, even for higher prescriptions.

A popular option for all lenses is an anti-reflective coating which will virtually eliminate distracting reflections on both sides of the lens. If you drive at night or use a VDU you will welcome the suppression of reflections in your line of sight and, when people look at you, they will see your eyes and not a reflection of the window!

If you need glasses that will help you see clearly both close up and far away you no longer need to have an unattractive 'bifocal' line across the lens. Progressive or varifocal lenses progress gradually from distance strength at the top to reading strength at the bottom, with a range of strengths in between. Most lenses can be supplied to order in a wide range of tints and you may wish to consider photochromic lenses which darken automatically in bright light. These days, photochromics are available in lightweight plastic as well as glass. Ask your eyecare practitioner for details of different lenses for different needs.

Cool in contacts

Recent developments in contact lens technology have resulted in products that are much more comfortable to wear for longer periods. Daily or monthly disposable lenses supplied as part of a planned replacement programme give wearers the confidence of always having fresh lenses in good condition with an easy care regime.

Nowadays, spectacle wearers are increasingly finding that contact lenses are a convenient alternative and complimentary form of vision correction. They are excellent for social wear and sports in particular as they offer safe and unrestricted vision regardless of weather conditions.

Tinted and coloured contact lenses can enhance or change natural eye colour (whether or not vision correction is needed), adding a new dimension to your facial appearance. Some contact lenses are also UV-inhibiting to protect the eyes from bright sunlight.

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