

Goldsmith WEBB

OPTICIANS



Summer 2007 News Letter

Sense in the sun

Sunglasses have become an all year round fashion accessory with a bewildering range of tints and colours, so it can be easy to overlook their prime function which is to protect your eyes from the harmful rays of the sun. Depletion of the ozone layer is increasing our exposure to strong sunlight. Whether you want to screen out bright sunshine on the beach or golf course, the glare of low winter sun, or dazzle from snow or water, it is essential to ensure your choice of sun specs is appropriate for the conditions.

Effective screening against damage caused by ultra violet light depends on the treatment and coatings of the lenses rather than on the shade or darkness of the sunglasses. Poor quality fashion sunglasses may also leave you vulnerable to headaches, fatigue and eyestrain.

Light and shade

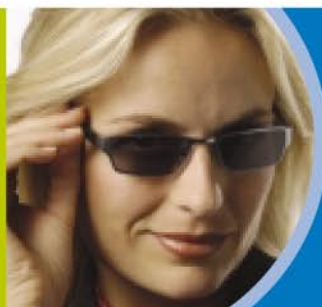
There are three types of UV radiation - UVA, UVB and UVC. UVC rays do not reach us as they are absorbed by the upper atmosphere; UVA and

UVB rays can damage different parts of the eye and the sensitive skin around the eyes, and are risk factors in diseases such as cataracts and macular degeneration. Good quality sunglasses block the maximum possible amount of these rays. Make sure that the sunglasses you choose carry the CE mark; this indicates they have been manufactured to controlled high standards and have UV absorbers in the material of the lens.

If you wear spectacles, you can have sunglasses fitted with lenses to meet your prescription. If your frames are of a suitable material then another option is a magnetic clip-on.

If you wear contact lenses or do not need vision correction, there is an extremely wide range of frames with plain lenses in various styles and shapes. If you spend a lot of time in the sun, then a dark tint will be more comfortable. A lighter tint can be suitable for duller days or for indoors under artificial lighting or working at a computer.

Without help, choosing new spectacles can be a daunting prospect but our qualified advice and experience can assist you.



Today's spectacles utilise the latest manufacturing techniques

For more information, or to make an appointment, please contact us at:

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Understanding Presbyopia



Are you suffering from 'screen fatigue'?



Committed to care

Our pledge to you

Closer than you think?



Choices to reflect upon

Neutral shades of brown, green or grey have a less distorting effect on the natural colours around us, whereas blue tints can change the way we perceive some colours and are not recommended for driving. Polarised lenses are effective in combating glare, for instance reflection from road surfaces or water. Close-fitting wraparound styles offer good protection from wind and light from the side, making them ideal for sports. Shatterproof polycarbonate lenses and impact-resistant frames are particularly recommended for sports and for children.

Photochromic lenses are also widely available. These darken on exposure to bright light and can help your eyes to adjust to frequent changes in light conditions without the need to constantly put on and take off your sunglasses. Not all photochromic lenses change tint as fast as others, so check



that the speed of reaction meets your needs.

Children spend a lot of time playing outdoors particularly in summer; as well as covering their skin with high factor sunblock, it is vital to protect their eyes from UV radiation with well fitting high quality sunglasses.

Sunglasses act as a barrier preventing

dust and airborne irritants such as pollen reaching the eye, so they can also help to reduce the symptoms of hayfever and other allergies.

Our optometrist and dispensing optician can advise you on the best style and tint to suit your lifestyle. They will ensure that the sunglasses you buy from our practice are made from high quality materials and that they fit properly to give your eyes the best possible protection - valuable advice that is not generally available from other retail outlets.

Has the print shrunk in the newspaper or on packet labels? Do your arms seem to be getting shorter? Are you progressively finding it more difficult to see things as clearly close up?

The most likely cause could be your age... more than 25 million people in the UK are presbyopic. Presbyopia is not a disease; it is an inevitable part of the normal ageing process.

It is a totally natural, gradual reduction in the ability of the eye to focus on close objects.

Although it may appear to happen suddenly, the decline occurs over many years. In order to project a well-defined image on the retina, the lens of the eye changes shape depending on the distance of an object. From childhood onwards the lens gradually stiffens and loses its flexibility. The ciliary muscle surrounding the lens which controls its shape also weakens over time. The result is a lessening of clear focus on close objects.

Take notice

Most people usually begin to notice the telltale signs in their mid 40s, although they may become evident slightly earlier if you are long sighted. The condition is not affected by how much you may currently use spectacles or contact lenses, so there is no benefit in putting off using reading glasses or other solutions recommended by your optometrist to correct your close vision.





symptoms

The most common symptoms include:

- Difficulty in maintaining clear close vision
- Blurring of or lack of contrast in normal print
- Tendency to hold reading materials at arm's length for accurate focus
- Need for more direct light or brighter conditions
- Tired eyes or headache when doing close work such as reading or sewing



Simple solutions

There are a number of solutions to correct presbyopia. If you have no other vision problems, the simplest remedy is to wear reading glasses. Single vision lenses can be used but everything beyond the reading area would be blurred, so you need a shallow lens or half-eye spectacle frame so that you can look over the top to see distant objects. Alternatively, bifocal or varifocal (also called progressive) lenses, combining a clear view further away with your reading prescription, reducing the need to take your spectacles on and off.

Presbyopia can be present with long or short sight, as well as with astigmatism, so if you already wear spectacles, your optometrist can prescribe a solution to suit your preference and lifestyle. This could be a bifocal or varifocal option, combining distance and reading prescriptions; or if you prefer, you can choose to wear separate pairs of spectacles for close vision and for your existing condition.

Contact lens wearers have three options - bifocal contact lenses, allowing you to see both far-away and close-up with a single pair of lenses; monovision (where one lens corrects near vision and the other is used for distance correction); or using reading glasses.

Testing for presbyopia is a standard part of your eye examination and regular checkups are recommended to monitor and ensure your prescription is appropriate. Whilst the condition cannot be prevented, good nutrition and an active lifestyle will contribute to your overall well-being, including the health of your eyes.

The small screen

Are you suffering from 'screen fatigue'? With TV monitors and computers, electronic games and even mobile phone and digital camera display screens featuring so prominently and ubiquitously at work and in our leisure activities, it is not surprising that we are increasingly suffering from headaches, shoulder and back pain and eyestrain.

Many of these physical discomforts can be avoided by thoughtful arrangement of your environment and sensible working practices. Simple adjustments to your seating, the positioning of your computer screen and documents on your desk, and suitable lighting conditions can all help to minimise problems.

Help yourself

Organise your workstation and the time you spend using a computer, both at work and at home. Maintain good posture in a supportive chair and sit facing the screen rather than twisting your back or neck at an angle. Adjust your seat so that you can work with your forearms parallel to the work surface with both feet on the ground or a footrest.



Make sure the computer is at a comfortable height and distance from your eyes, usually about 60cm.

Place papers at a similar distance, on the desk or using a document holder, to avoid frequent re-focusing.

Room lighting should be three times brighter than the screen, which should be kept clean and dust free. Newer flat-screen monitors present higher resolution distortion-free images. Eliminate glare and reflections on the screen by putting blinds or curtains at the windows.

Tired, dry or irritated eyes, blurred vision, eyestrain and headaches can be the consequence of prolonged concentration on the screen. Take regular breaks, say every twenty minutes, to look away from the screen and relax your shoulders and your gaze. Surfing the Internet or playing computer games does not count as a break. If you are in an office environment, try to vary your workload with phone calls, writing/reading work, filing, photocopying or talking with colleagues. (Cont.....)

The small screen

(.....Cont) If you find that your eyes feel hot, dry or gritty while working at your computer, consciously increase your blink rate to help restore the tear film layer, or try lubricant eyedrops and re-wet your contact lenses for relief.

If you already wear spectacles or contact lenses you may benefit from using a second pair specifically for computer use. Anti-reflection lens coating or a special tint can be helpful. Also ensure that you use the right products to keep your spectacle lenses clean, thereby avoiding scratches and damage.

If you use a computer monitor (or visual display unit VDU) at work, legislation obliges your employer to pay for a routine eye examination and to contribute to any spectacles which may be required specifically for computer use at work. Make sure that you take advantage of this opportunity to keep a regular check on the health of your eyes.

Also encourage sensible eyecare habits from a young age by ensuring that your children do not spend long uninterrupted periods playing on their game consoles or sitting close to and staring at television or computer screens. Remember that a child is entitled to a free NHS eye examination up to the age of 16, or to age 19 if still in full-time education.

If you use a VDU for work your employer must:

- Provide a full eye examination free to you when you start working on the VDU and at regular intervals afterwards
- Provide a full eye examination to you if you are experiencing visual problems which may be associated with a VDU
- Pay for a pair of basic spectacles if you need these specifically for VDU work, or an equivalent amount towards a pair of your choice
- Encourage adequate breaks or changes of activity to reduce visual tiredness
- Provide health and safety training information relating to the workstation and keep you informed about the regulations



Vision Aid Overseas

Vision Aid Overseas is looking forward to a ground-breaking 2007 building on an excellent year of progress and patient service during 2006. In the past twelve months, VAO organised seventeen projects to Africa as well as two in India and one project in the Ukraine with Prison Fellowship International.



A significant highlight of the year was a challenging project to train nurses in Ethiopia to become independent refractionists. Eleven students were picked from health clinics all over southern and central Ethiopia. Four projects visited Butajira throughout the year. Each organised a mixture of classroom training and supervised practice time on patients of the health clinic. The teams were very encouraged by the enthusiasm and quick progress of the students but it was quickly realised that practice was a key element of the training programme. Clinics were organised on Saturday mornings during the interim periods that would allow the nurses to practice and dispense prescriptions under a Doctor's supervision. By utilising the workshop in Butajira, the nurses were also able to provide glasses for their patients. Now the students are able to refract in their own clinics, a huge number of people will be able to benefit from their work.

Looking ahead to the rest of the year, VAO has 24 projects planned during 2007 and hopes to reach over 30,000 people. It is also determined to expand its training and workshop activity.

If you are interested in supporting the work of Vision Aid Overseas please visit their website www.vao.org.uk for more information or call 01293 535016.

Vision Aid Overseas is registered charity (in England) no. 1081695.

Our pledge to you



SIGHT CARE

We are committed to providing:

- A comprehensive eye examination including screening and diagnostic tests and referrals for medical care if necessary

- Advice on eye health and safety at work and play
- Information on the visual development of children
- A copy of your spectacle or contact lens prescription

- Spectacles dispensed by qualified staff
- Expert advice on frames and lenses to suit your needs
- A 12-month guarantee against faulty manufacture on all our spectacles

The prestigious Sight Care symbol you will see in this practice means that we are your local independent optician with an agreed standard of care.