

BI-FOCAL SPECTACLES

Q Why do I need bi-focals?

A Throughout life there is a gradual decline in the eyes' ability to change focus from distance to close-up, caused by the hardening of the lens within the eye. Although the process begins in early adulthood, most people first notice the problem when they reach their mid forties when they can no longer focus on objects at the normal reading distance.

If you do not wear spectacles for seeing in the distance, you could have ordinary reading spectacles. However, your distance vision through these will be blurred and you would either need to take them off or look over the top to see clearly.

If you already wear spectacles for seeing in the distance, you will begin to find that you can no longer see to read comfortably through them. You could have a separate pair of spectacles for reading but your distance vision through these would be blurred and you would need to carry around two pairs of spectacles.



Bi-focals are like two pairs of spectacles in one. When you look through the top part of the lens you see clearly in the distance. When you look through the lower part of the lens you see clearly for reading.

Q Are there different types of bi-focal lenses?

Yes – there are many types of bi-focal lenses available and your optician will be able to advise on the most suitable type for your eyes and your occupation or lifestyle. The most common type of bi-focal is the D-shaped bi-focal which has a flat edge at the top which gives a wide reading area as soon as you look into the bifocal part of the lens.

Q Will they take long to get used to?

A Modern bi-focal lenses give excellent vision under most conditions and most people adapt to them very quickly. You will have to learn to get your head in the correct position so that you are looking through the bi-focal part when reading but this usually becomes second nature after a few days. You will also need to take care when going up or down steps to begin with because if you try to look down without lowering your head, the ground will look rather blurred.



Q Are they suitable for driving?

A Yes – you should have no problem driving with bifocal lenses.

Q Are they suitable for looking at a computer screen?

clearly at intermediate distances as well, your optician may recommend a progressive lens.

A It depends on your prescription and the type of bi-focal lenses. In general, bi-focal lenses are not ideal for viewing a computer screen. The screen may not be very clear through the top part of the lens and to look through the bottom part of the lens involves tilting your head back which can lead to neck and back problems if you do it for any length of time.

If you are using a computer for many hours a day, your optician may recommend a special pair of bi-focals or perhaps progressive lenses or ordinary spectacles specifically for viewing the screen. If your normal spectacles are not adequate for viewing your computer screen, your employer is obliged to make a contribution towards the cost of new spectacles for work.



Q What are the disadvantages of bifocals?

A Although modern bifocals are quite inconspicuous, a line or curve will still be visible on the lens.

Bi-focals are usually designed to give clear vision in the distance and at a normal reading distance. However, objects at intermediate distances (1 metre) will not be perfectly clear through either portion of the bi-focal lens.

If you do not like the idea of a line on the lenses or you need to see

