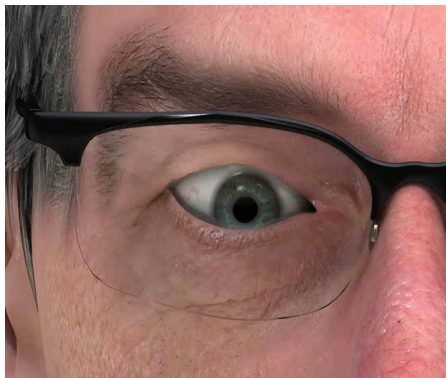


PROGRESSIVE (VARIFOCAL) SPECTACLES

Q What are progressive lenses?

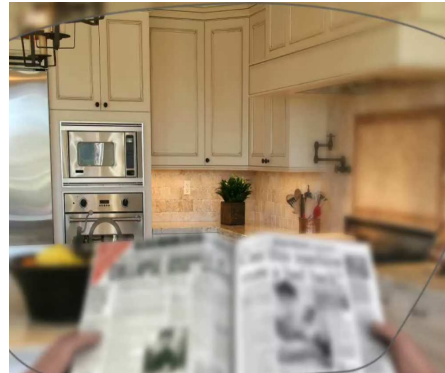
A Progressive lenses, also called varifocals, graduated lenses and no-line bi-focals, are spectacle lenses designed to give those who have lost the ability to change the focal power of the eye (accommodate), clear vision over a range of distances. The top part of the lens is designed to give clear vision when looking in the distance. The lens then gets progressively stronger (more positive) so that as you look down through the lens you see clearly at a range of intermediate distances and then eventually at your normal reading distance.



Q Why do I need progressive lenses?

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-focal lenses have a portion at the top of the lens for looking in the distance and a discrete portion at the bottom of the lens for reading. These lenses work well for many people but have the disadvantage of having a visible line or curve on the lens and do not provide clear vision at intermediate distances (e.g. 1 metre).

Progressive lenses have no lines and because the lens gets progressively stronger, it gives clear vision over a range of distances from distance to close-up.

Q Are there different types of progressive lenses?

A Yes – there are many types of progressive lenses available and your optician will be able to advise on the most suitable type for you

eyes and your occupation or lifestyle.

Q Will they take long to get used to?

A Modern progressive 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 correct part of the lens 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 progressive lenses.

Q Are they suitable for looking at a computer screen?

A Progressive lenses are generally suitable for people who use computer screens. Depending on the positioning and height of the screen, you may have to tilt your head back slightly to look through the appropriate part of the lens.

If you are using a computer for many hours a day, your optician may recommend a special pair of 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 progressive lenses?

A Modern progressive lenses give excellent vision over a wide range of viewing distances. However, the truth is that no lens is capable of giving you back the vision of youth. With progressive lenses

you will need to ensure that you look through the correct part of the lens to see at different distances. Most people find that this becomes automatic after a few days.

