

READY READERS

Q Why do I need reading glasses?

A As you get older there is a gradual decline in the eyes' ability to change focus from distance to near. This condition, known as presbyopia, is 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.

Q Who needs reading glasses?

A Everybody! The hardening of the lens affects everybody although the exact age when it reaches the stage when spectacles are required for reading varies to some extent.

There is no evidence that eye exercises or diet affects the development or progression of presbyopia in any way.

Q What type of glasses do I need?

A Presbyopia can be easily corrected by spectacles. If you do not wear spectacles for looking in the distance you will just require spectacles for close work. However, it is important to note that you will not be able to see clearly when you look in the distance when wearing these glasses. If you already wear spectacles for looking in the distance, you will require a second pair for reading. Alternatively, you might consider bifocal or progressive lenses which contain a distance and reading prescription in one lens.

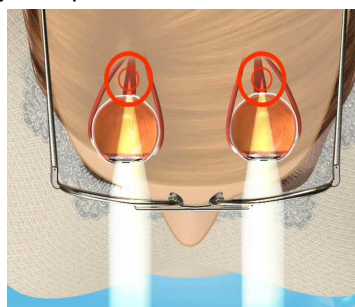
Contact lenses are available to correct presbyopia but as yet there is no proven surgical procedure available.

Your optometrist/optician will be able to advise on the best solution for your eyes.

Q What's wrong with off-the-shelf reading glasses?

A You may be tempted to buy off-the-shelf reading glasses. Before you do so you should consider the following:

- Off-the-shelf reading glasses will only work if you do not require spectacles for looking in the distance.
- Off-the-shelf reading glasses have the same prescription in both lenses. Most people require a slightly different prescription for each eye in order to read comfortably.
- Off-the-shelf reading glasses do not incorporate any correction for astigmatism. Most people have some degree of astigmatism which requires correction in order to optimise vision for reading.
- To see comfortably through reading glasses, the lenses must be correctly aligned with respect to your eyes. Off-the-shelf reading glasses are mass produced and are therefore unlikely to be exactly aligned with your eyes.
- Off-the-shelf reading glasses are usually of an inferior quality to those provided by your optician.



Your optician will be able to advise if you are suitable for off-the-shelf reading glasses. If you are, it is generally advisable to buy these from your optician so that they can recommend the appropriate power and fit the frames properly.