

## Prescription Sunglasses - Trendy Yet Useful Eyewear

Picture yourself driving a car or lying on a beach blanket on a hot, sunny day. If you had less than 20/20 vision and if this scenario was set decades ago, chances are you would be rummaging in your bag for tinted prescription lenses to clip on to your eye glasses. Fast-forward to the 21st century where things are done differently. Sure, clip-ons are still widely available, but they're hardly the only choice anymore. Today, with prescription sunglasses, people with less than perfect vision can look cool but not compromise their need for visual clarity.

There are many types of prescription sunglasses to suit any individual's taste and style. Those who prefer clip-ons may consider fitovers, which are separate sun glasses designed to "fit over" existing prescription eyewear. Then there are devices called "adapters." Adapters are prescription lenses designed to snap on the bridge of a pair of sunglasses - thereby transforming them into corrective sunglasses. And of course, there are prescription sunglasses whose lenses are ground to the user's specifications. Usually, the frame and prescription lenses are purchased from the same manufacturer. Famous brands offer this service - among them Oakley and Costa del Mar.

Corrective sunglasses are also a necessity for a number of people who engage in sports. If you've ever watched a professional basketball game (such as those held by the NBA), you've probably seen some of the players wearing snug goggles - these are pretty much like prescription sunglasses, but the latter are geared for outdoor use. So, corrective sunglasses are very popular among athletes such as bikers, race car drivers, snow sports enthusiasts, and many others. And as can be expected, there are numerous popular styles, such as Ray-Ban's classic aviator style and the snug, wrap-around style. Prescription lenses used to be difficult to fit into wrap-around shades; the curve of the frame would require the lenses to be bent, thus distorting images. But quite a number of manufacturers nowadays are able to work around this difficulty and provide corrective lenses for trendy wrap-around shades.

Lenses are available in a wide variety of materials. Even though glass used to be the material of choice because of the optics quality it provides, many people are eschewing it now because of its weight and its propensity to break when hit. Today, prescription lenses are usually made from polycarbonate, high-index, and CR-39 (regular plastic). There is even something called a photochromic lens. This kind of lens is dark in bright sunlight, but turns lighter and more translucent when sunlight is reduced - for instance, when the wearer goes indoors. It may be very convenient because the user doesn't have to remove his or her corrective sunglasses to put on regular glasses. But remember that some photochromic lenses are not designed for ultraviolet (UV) ray protection. And one of the prerequisites of good quality sunglasses, corrective or otherwise, is that they should be at least 90 percent effective in blocking UVA and UVB rays.

People with more complicated vision problems than astigmatism or myopia - such as presbyopia - can also benefit from the wide variety of prescription sunglasses out there today. Those with presbyopic vision oftentimes need bifocals or progressive lenses, which are available in sunglass version. Bifocal sunglasses that are ready to wear (if you already know your prescription) are available from brands such as Action Tropics.

Another innovation in optical wear that are of great benefit to those with vision problems has to do with polarized lenses. This type of lens can be used for corrective sunglasses. The main benefit of polarized sunglasses is that they block the glare that results from sunlight bouncing on surfaces like water, pavement, and snow. They filter the light waves that cause the glare, but allow other types of light wave in, so the wearer gets to enjoy sights under a bright sun naturally, but without having to strain the eyes by squinting against sunlight.

Before going out to purchase a pair of prescription sunglasses, it would be best to visit an eye expert to determine the grade of glasses you need. If you wear contact lenses, remember that your contact lens grade may be different from your spectacles grade. Remember also that certain types of frames may not be suitable for you - either because they are not suited to your face, or because the lenses you need are too thick to fit into the frame you want. In any case, an optician or another eye professional can give you advice and help you choose the right pair of prescription sunglasses for you.

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### About the Author

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