

Spectacle Care

Effective care and maintenance of your optical appliance

If you have just purchased a new pair of spectacles then congratulations! We are confident you will be happy with your spectacles and the clear, comfortable vision they provide. However, please take the time to read this pamphlet for tips on how to make the most of your new purchase.

It is always a good idea to handle your spectacles carefully. Spectacles are custom made, high-tech appliances that serve a very important function - they help you see.

Your optometrist will have spent time with you ensuring your frames are correct and comfortable to wear. If the adjustment or fit of the spectacles becomes altered then your ability to see clearly or comfortably may be compromised. Spectacles can be stressed by putting them on or taking them off at an angle (instead of straight on from the front) and also by pushing the frame up onto your forehead.



- **What is the best way to put spectacles on?**

It is best to hold your spectacles with both hands when putting them on or taking them off. To minimise any risk of stress or damage, hold the front of the frame with both hands when putting on, or alternatively, hold both temples (side pieces).

When putting your spectacles on, push the temples gently over your ears and ease the frame straight back onto your nose. You can remove your spectacles by using the same two-handed grip simultaneously raising the temples and sliding your specs forward.

Do not rest your spectacles on your forehead or up on your head. This stretches the temples out of shape and will make for uncomfortable wearing. Stretching may also cause the spectacles to slip down your nose and you may find that you do not see quite so clearly through the lenses as when they are fitting properly.

- **It is important to keep your spectacles clean.**

Your lenses will give you the best vision when they are kept clean. Always rinse lenses before wiping them as this flushes off grit and other abrasive particles. Use cold or warm water, **never use hot water!** Hot water may cause crazing of the antireflection coatings used on many modern lenses.



If the lenses are dirty or smeared use liquid soap (or detergent) and wipe lenses clean under a running tap. Isopropyl alcohol can also be used to clean smeared lenses.

Once the lenses are thoroughly clean, dry them with a soft cloth; if the lenses have antireflective coating then finish off by wiping with a clean micro-fibre lens cloth. Failure to take this last step may leave a streaky or oily effect on the surface of the lenses – not good for clear vision! Be sure to hold the frame at the edge of the lens you are wiping to

avoid putting unnecessary strain on the bridge piece of the frame.

Always wash your glasses after they have been exposed to perspiration, salt spray, sea water, dirt and chemicals (sprays and liquids).

No lenses should ever be rubbed or polished when they are dry, so your optometrist can suggest the correct solution to use with a suitable cleaning cloth to keep the lenses in the best possible condition. Satin-like “micro cloths” should be used for this purpose.

Cleaning your lenses with a dirty cloth is a sure way to scratch them, so always use a clean lens cloth for cleaning. Cleaning cloths and 'micro cloths' are available from your optometrist in a wide range of colours and designs.

- **What about cleaning the frame?**

Washing with warm soapy water will also clean your spectacle frames. Nose pads and the bridge can be further cleaned using a soft toothbrush gently as required. Be very careful not to use the brush on the lenses. You can also take your spectacles to your optometrist for ultrasound cleaning, though there may be a charge for this service.

Silicon nose pads, as featured on many metal frames, tend to discolour over time and may become less comfortable. They are simple and inexpensive to change – your optometrist will have a range of these in stock to suit most frames.

- **What about when you are not wearing your spectacles?**

When you're not wearing your spectacles keep them in their case. The case is designed to protect the frame and lenses from most knocks and scratches. If you have to put your spectacles down and they're not in their case, make sure the lenses are not touching anything. Some forms of lens scratch easily if they're exposed to hard or rough surfaces.



Avoid placing spectacles in situations where they are likely to get hot, (e.g. on a heater; in a hot car even in the glove box) because under these conditions there is a risk the lens coatings will craze, peel or break down. With proper care these problems are very rare.

Keep an eye on the condition of your spectacle case and update it from time to time. The flocked lining inside many cases can gradually gather dust, and this can act to scratch your lenses, particularly if the spectacles are a tight fit in the case. If there is a sticker inside the case you should watch out for the edges lifting as the sticky surface can attract dust and then cause scratching on your lenses. If you need a replacement case, your optometrist has a range of options for you.

- **What should you do if your spectacles become loose?**

Because spectacles are worn frequently, they may become out of shape and no longer fit properly, or screws in the frame can get loose. If you notice a screw or the fitting of your frames loosening, please call in to your optometrist to get them adjusted. Have loose screws tightened before the lens comes out and gets lost. Don't try to adjust frames yourself – you may damage them.

If you cannot cope without your spectacles then you really need to maintain a spare pair for emergencies.

This is particularly important if you require spectacles for driving. The back-up pair does not necessarily have to be your most recent prescription, but it is important to have them there - just in case.

Regular Eye Exams!!!

The NZ Association of Optometrists recommends a regular eye examination every 2 – 3 years for healthy adults. After age 65 more frequent exams are necessary to ensure early diagnosis and treatment of sight threatening conditions such as glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration (ARMD).

Remember, your optometrist can also make your prescription into sunglasses. This will aid driving in those awkward times of glare and give you protection against ultra violet radiation.