

Buyers Guide to Eyewear

Selecting the Right Frame

The most important aspect of choosing eyeglass frames is how they look on our face. You simply need to determine your face shape and coloring, and understand which eyeglass frame styles and colors would look best on you.

You should consider two main points when choosing an eyeglass frame for your face shape, according to The Vision Council:

1. The frame shape should contrast with your face shape.
2. The frame color should contrast with your skin, hair and eye color.

FACE SHAPE

While most faces are a combination of shapes and angles, there are seven basic face shapes: *round, oval, oblong, base-down triangle, base-up triangle, diamond and square*.

Round

A round face has curved lines with the width and length in the same proportions and no angles. To make a round face appear thinner and longer, try angular narrow eyeglass frames to lengthen the face, a clear bridge that widens the eyes, and frames that are wider than they are deep, such as a rectangular shape.

Oval

An oval face is considered to be the ideal shape because of its balanced proportions. To keep the oval's natural balance, look for eyeglass frames that are as wide as (or wider than) the broadest part of the face, or walnut-shaped frames that are not too deep or too narrow.

Oblong

An oblong face is longer than it is wide and has a long straight cheek line and sometimes a longish nose. To make an oblong face appear shorter and more balanced, try frames that have more depth than width, decorative or contrasting temples that add width to the face, or a low bridge to shorten the nose.

Base-Down Triangle

A base-down triangular face has a narrow forehead and widens at the cheek and chin areas. To add width and emphasize the narrow upper third of the face, try frames that are heavily accented with color and detailing on the top half or cat-eye shapes.

Base-Up Triangle

This face has a very wide top third and small bottom third. To minimize the width of the top of the face, try frames that are wider at the bottom, very light colors and materials and rimless frame styles (which have a light, airy effect because the lenses are simply held in place by a few screws, with no surrounding frame material).

Diamond

Diamond-shaped faces are narrow at the eye line and jawline, and have broad cheekbones that may be high and dramatic. This is the rarest face shape. To highlight the eyes and soften the cheekbones, try frames that have detailing or distinctive brow lines, or try rimless frames or oval and cat-eye shapes.

Square

A square face has a strong jaw line and a broad forehead, plus the width and length are in the same proportions. To make a square face look longer and soften the angles, try narrow frame styles, frames that have more width than depth, and narrow ovals.

COLOR ANALYSIS

The main factors that determine the best color palette are the colors of the skin, eyes and hair.

Skin. Skin tone is the prime element in determining coloring. All complexions fall into one of two color bases — blue (cool) or yellow (warm). A cool complexion has blue or pink undertones, and a warm complexion has a “peaches and cream” or yellow cast. Olive skin is considered cool because it is a mixture of blue and yellow.

Eyes. Eye colors usually are a secondary element in determining coloring because of the many variations of eye color. For example, blue eyes can range from a cool almost-violet to a pale blue-gray, which is warm. Brown eyes can vary from a light shade through a medium-brown to a cool almost-black.

Hair. Hair colors also are considered warm or cool. Strawberry blond, platinum, blue-black, white, auburn, salt-and-pepper and ash brown are cool. Warm hair colors include golden blond, brownish black, brown-gold, red and gray.

FRAME COLOR

Once you have determined if you are “warm” or “cool,” then you can find the eyeglass frame colors that will suit you the best. Some examples of frame colors best for warm coloring are: camel, khaki, gold, copper, peach, orange, coral, off-white, fire-engine red, warm blue and blond tortoise.

For cool coloring, the best eyeglass frame hues are black, silver, rose-brown, blue-gray, plum, magenta, pink, jade, blue and demi-amber (darker) tortoise.

Which Colors Are “In” for Apparel and Eyeglass Frames?

If you keep up with fashion trends, then you probably pay attention to the colors that dominate each season in fashion magazines and clothing stores. Retailers and manufacturers adjust their apparel and accessories colors according to what designers think consumers will consider most appealing. Eyewear designers create frames in the latest colors, too.

Pantone, the company that produces color palettes for graphic designers, fabric manufacturers, paint makers, interior decorators and more, releases color fashion reports each spring and fall.

Just because certain colors are in style right now for apparel doesn’t mean your next eyeglass or sunglass frame necessarily should match. You could pair classic tortoise frames with a phlox-colored shirt or a black frame with a bamboo-colored handbag. As long as you’re open to new color ideas, you’ll never be accused of having boring eyewear.

Selecting the Right Lenses and Treatments

Going to the optical today can be a confusing experience. Not only are you plagued with finding the perfect frame to suit your face and personal style but then you have the task of choosing the right lenses for your vision needs. If you are not working with a professional and personable optician, you may not know the different lens and treatment options available to you and how they can benefit your vision. Below are some descriptions of various lenses to help you differentiate them and decide what's best for your needs.

TYPES OF LENSES

Single Vision

Single vision lenses function as all-purpose glasses for persons who have normal vision problems. Single vision lenses are available in all lens materials.

Bifocals (Flat Top)

A flat top bifocal is a correction for distance and near vision in one pair of glasses. Flat Top 28 is the most popular bifocal form. It is also available with the bifocal portion made in different widths (Flat top 35 and Executive Bifocals) to help with various close-up occupations. Flat tops are made in all lens material types.

Executive Style Bifocals

Sometimes used for those who need a wide field of vision for near work (accountants, for example), Executive Style Bifocals have a distinctive appearance and are thicker because of their design. They are generally only available in hard resin and polycarbonate.

Trifocals

Flat top trifocals are the most widely used form. The added segment provides clear vision at arm's length distance, the area that is usually blurred for bifocal wearers. Trifocals are available in all lens materials.

Progressives (no line bifocals)

These lenses provide all the benefits of bifocals but add the feature of continuous clear vision at all distances, including mid-range distance (arm's length). Progressives have the cosmetic advantage to be single vision lenses so they never show the user wears bifocals. Progressives are available in all lens materials. Because of their many benefits, they are becoming the lens of choice for bifocal and trifocal wearers.

MATERIALS

CR39 – Plastic

Conventional plastic lenses are half the weight of traditional glass lenses and can be tinted to almost any color and density. CR39 lenses are more easily scratched but can have an optional scratch protection applied. More impact resistant than glass, plastic lenses do not require heat treating.

Polycarbonate

Poly carbonate lenses are the most impact resistant lenses available and are always the lens of choice for kids, young people and active patients. Poly carbonate lenses are lighter, thinner and more comfortable lenses than plastics. They absorb harmful UV light and can be made with ultra thin edges because of their unique strength.

High Index

Modern technology has created lenses that bend light differently so that stronger prescriptions are thinner than when made in conventional plastic materials. Such lenses are called "high index" and are more attractive because they are slimmer. High index plastic uses less material so they are often lighter in weight than CR39 and Polycarbonate lenses. High index lenses also absorb harmful UV light and can be tinted to any shade or color.

Transitions

These are lenses that darken as you go from indoors to outdoors. They darken to a moderate shade of grey or brown. Note that Transitions do not change color in automobiles due to the UV protection the windshield offers.

Polarized Sun Lenses

These are the exciting sunglasses that eliminate reflected glare. They are especially appropriate for drivers, athletes, fisherman, hunters and all types of outdoor activities.

TREATMENTS

Tint

All lens materials except glass can be tinted in any color desired. Shades of any color ranges from 1 to 4 with 3 being the most common sunglass shade ordered. Solid and gradient tints are available.

UV Protection

It is generally acknowledged that the ultraviolet rays in sunlight pose potential harm to eyes. Specific treatment is available for plastic lenses that completely blocks hazardous UV light. Lenses like poly carbonate and high index include built-in UV protection at no extra cost.

Anti-Reflective Coating

Special anti-reflective coatings are now available for lenses, much like those used for fine camera lenses. These coatings are particularly effective for reducing eye fatigue and glare for computer users and anyone driving at night. And, of course, AR lenses enhance appearance by removing all distracting reflections