



Presbyopia

We don't have to like it but, as our eyes age, our vision decreases. Specifically, the crystalline lens of the eye loses its elasticity and changes the focal point within the eye. As you may already be experiencing, you'll need one correction for seeing up close and a different one for distance vision. Generally, the amount of correction needed for close work increases to a point, then stabilizes.

- If you don't need correction for distance vision, you'll probably have to hold items you're trying to read further away to see clearly. In time, you'll probably need reading glasses to magnify the print.
- If you're nearsighted and wearing corrective lenses for distance vision, you'll find yourself having to remove your glasses to read.
- If you're farsighted, you'll probably need more magnification for your near vision than your distance vision and you'll be a good candidate for bifocals earlier.

Monovision—An Alternative to Reading Glasses for Presbiopics

If you've been diagnosed as having presbyopia, the condition resulting from the natural aging process of the eye, monovision may be a good choice of correction for you. Monovision can be achieved either through the use of contact lenses or via refractive surgery. A simple exam determines your dominant eye which is then corrected for distance vision with the non-dominant eye corrected for vision up close. Our brains automatically adapt to this change without any effort or awareness on our part. Monovision allows you to change the range of focus repeatedly without putting on or taking off any corrective lenses.

There are some disadvantages to monovision that you should be aware of before making a choice. You may have a decreased degree of depth perception with monovision. When driving and looking in your side mirror, you may notice blurred vision in your near eye or when an object blocks your vision in the distance eye. Some people may choose to wear corrective lenses for close work such as night driving or prolonged reading so that both eyes are in simultaneous focus. Usually, these are only used occasionally and much less frequently than reading glasses would be used without monovision.

- You may want to consider monovision if you can truthfully answer yes to two or more of the following questions.
- Would it bother me to wear reading glasses and carry them whenever I go as I get older?
- Does my lifestyle permit a slight impairment of depth perception for many activities?
- When I require reading glasses, would I need to wear them most of the time?
- Could I adapt to one eye being slightly out of focus for distances unless thin glasses are worn?
- People in mid-life interested in exploring the option of monovision should discuss the option with their doctor prior to undergoing refractive surgery or being fit for contact lenses.