

Presbyopia

Presbyopia usually occurs beginning at around age 40, when people experience blurred near vision when reading, sewing or working at the computer.

You can't escape presbyopia, even if you've never had a vision problem before. Even people who are nearsighted will notice that their near vision blurs when they wear their usual eyeglasses or contact lenses to correct distance vision.

Presbyopia is widespread in the United States. According to U.S. Census Bureau data, over 135 million Americans were age 40 and older in 2008, and the country is growing older: The median age reached 36.8 in 2008, up 1.5 years since 2000. This growing number of older citizens generates a huge demand for eyewear, contact lenses and surgery that can help presbyopes deal with their failing near vision.

Presbyopia Symptoms and Signs



When people develop presbyopia, they find they need to hold books, magazines, newspapers, menus and other reading materials at arm's length in order to focus properly. When they perform near work, such as working on a computer, embroidery or handwriting, they may develop headaches, eye strain or feel fatigued.

What Causes Presbyopia?

Presbyopia is caused by an age-related process. This differs from [astigmatism](#), [nearsightedness](#) and [farsightedness](#), which are related to the shape of the eyeball and are caused by genetic and environmental factors. Presbyopia generally is believed to stem from a gradual thickening and loss of flexibility of the natural lens inside your eye.

These age-related changes occur within the proteins in the lens, making the lens harder and less elastic over time. Age-related changes also take place in the muscle fibers surrounding the lens. With less elasticity, the eye has a harder time focusing up close. Other, less popular theories exist as well.

Presbyopia Treatment: Eyewear

Eyeglasses with bifocal or progressive addition lenses (PALs) are the most common correction for presbyopia. Bifocal means two points of focus: the main part of the spectacle lens contains a prescription for distance vision, while the lower portion of the lens holds the stronger near prescription for close work. Progressive addition lenses are similar to bifocal lenses, but they offer a more gradual visual transition between the two prescriptions, with no visible line between them.

Reading glasses are another choice. Unlike bifocals and PALs, which most people wear all day, reading glasses typically are worn just during close work. If you wear contact lenses, your eye doctor can prescribe reading glasses that you wear while your contacts are in. You may purchase readers over-the-counter at a retail store, or you can get higher-quality versions prescribed by your eye doctor.

Presbyopes also can opt for multifocal contact lenses, available in gas permeable or soft lens materials. Another type of contact lens correction for presbyopia is monovision, in which one

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eye wears a distance prescription, and the other wears a prescription for near vision. The brain learns to favor one eye or the other for different tasks. But while some people are delighted with this solution, others complain of reduced visual acuity and some loss of depth perception with monovision.

Because the human lens continues to change as you grow older, your presbyopic prescription will need to be increased over time as well. You can expect your eye care practitioner to prescribe a stronger correction for near work as you need it.

Want to learn more? Please call Dr. Lothes at (614) 841-9300 to set-up an examination and consultation.