

PRESBYOPIA

As we age the lens within the eye becomes less flexible, a process that begins in our teenage years but only becomes an issue for most people after the age of 40. This results in the need for glasses when reading or doing other near tasks because the eye muscles are unable to sufficiently change the shape of the now less flexible lens. This process is termed presbyopia and is separate to other focussing errors that might affect distance vision.

Eventually we will all have to deal with this visual problem and the vast majority of us will do so by using reading glasses. However, there are refractive surgery strategies you can consider instead.

Whilst many procedures have come and gone over the years only two options have consistently been found to be of benefit.

The first is blended vision - a strategy that leaves one eye focussed for the distance, and the other focussed for near. The brain learns to accept this over time but compared with reading glasses, it is a compromise that can affect depth perception.

Many people accept this trade off but some find it necessary to return to reading glasses. Pre-operative measures can be used to demonstrate the advantages and disadvantages of this approach before any surgery is performed. Both laser vision correction and refractive lens exchange procedures can be used to create blended vision.

People undergoing refractive lens exchange have the additional option of intraocular lenses that provide focus for distance and near in the same eye. Using these lens implants in both eyes means that the eyes are balanced and therefore depth perception is maintained. These lens implants have the potential to cause some glare and haloing at night and some loss of contrast - meaning a small compromise in visual quality is required to gain the lifestyle benefits they provide.

Currently, it is not possible to demonstrate the compromises of these lenses pre-operatively and in so doing evaluate their advantages and disadvantages before surgery. What can be shown is that the tolerance and acceptance of these lenses has dramatically improved over the last 20 years enabling them to be used successfully in selected circumstances.

For further assistance, or to take the next step in your visual journey, please don't hesitate to book a tele-consultation assessment or in-house appointment during which we can further detail your individual eye health and refine your options.

We're here to help you see the possibilities.