THE
EYE PRACTICE

Quick guide

YOUR EYE TEST RESULTS

Ever wondered what all those numbers actually mean when you have your eyes tested? This guide explains your glasses prescription and helps you understand exactly what each measurement tells us about your vision.

WHAT YOUR PRESCRIPTION REVEALS

Your spectacle prescription is essentially a blueprint of your unique vision needs. It measures how short-sighted or long-sighted you are in each eye, plus any astigmatism correction required. All measurements are recorded in dioptres (D) – the standard unit for measuring lens power.

Understanding short and long sight

The shape of your cornea – the clear dome at the front of your eye – determines whether you're short or long-sighted. Think of it as

your eye's primary lens, focusing light onto your retina at the back of your eye.

Short-sighted (myopic) eyes have a cornea that's more curved than average. You'll see clearly up close, but distance vision appears blurred. Your prescription shows a minus (-) sign, and your lenses will be thicker at the edges.

Long-sighted (hyperopic) eyes have a flatter cornea. Close work tends to be more challenging, though distance vision may remain clear. Your prescription shows a plus (+) sign, and your lenses will be thicker in the centre, making your eyes appear slightly larger.

What is astigmatism?

Astigmatism simply means your cornea isn't perfectly round – it's shaped more like a rugby ball than a basketball. One curve is steeper than the other, creating different focusing powers in different directions.

This condition is completely normal. In fact, most people have some degree of astigmatism. The slight oval shape often develops naturally due to your eye's position between your brow bone and cheekbone, plus gentle pressure from your eyelids.

DECODING YOUR PRESCRIPTION

The basics

Your prescription shows measurements for each eye separately:

- Right eye: **RE (or OD)**
- Left eye: **LE (or OS)**

Reading the numbers

Simple prescriptions show just one number, indicating your eye is spherical with no astigmatism correction needed:

- Example: RE: +4.74DS

Most prescriptions include astigmatism correction and look like this:

- Example: RE: -3.00 DS / -1.00 DC x 90

Let's break this down:

- -3.00 DS: The primary focusing power (spherical component)
- -1.00 DC: Additional power needed for astigmatism correction (cylinder component)
- x 90: The axis – the precise angle where this extra power is positioned

In this example, one curve of your cornea needs 3 dioptres of short-sight correction,

while the perpendicular curve needs 4 dioptres total (the original 3 plus the extra 1).

Reading prescriptions

If you're over 45, you'll likely need different prescriptions for distance and reading. This appears:

- Reading Add: +2.00 DS

This additional plus power helps your eyes focus on close work. The strength depends on your reading distance, so you might have different prescriptions for books versus computer work.

Prism corrections

When your eyes don't work together properly, causing double vision, we can add a slight wedge shape to your lenses. This redirects light to align the images from both eyes.

Prism measurements appear as:

- Example: RE: +1.75 DS 1.0 Δ BU

The triangle symbol (Δ) indicates prism power, measured in prism dioptres. The letters show direction:

- BU/BD: Base up or down (vertical correction)
- BI/BO: Base in or out (horizontal correction)

Understanding vision quality

What does 20/20 vision mean?

During your eye test, you read letters from a chart positioned 6 metres away. The vision measurement compares what you see to a typical healthy eye at that distance.

20/20 vision (or 6/6 in Australia) means you can read the smallest letters that a normal eye can read at 20 feet (6 metres).

20/40 vision means you need to be at 20 feet to read what a normal eye can read at 40 feet – indicating reduced sharpness.

Most healthy eyes achieve 20/20 vision with proper glasses correction. If you have conditions like lazy eye or eye disease, you may not reach 20/20 even with glasses, but we'll work to get you the best vision possible.

TAKING CARE OF YOUR VISION

Understanding your prescription helps you make informed decisions about your eye care. Regular eye examinations ensure your prescription stays current and help us monitor your overall eye health.

Need an eye examination?

Make an appointment 02 9290 1899 for an appointment, book online at theeyepractice.com.au