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Sunglasses and Your Eyes

April 12, 2018 [SUNGLASSES](#)

The Future's So Bright, We Gotta Buy Shades

Aviators. Butterflies. Cat-Eyes. Rectangles, shields, squares, wraps and wayfarers. Regardless of which style catches your eye, the most important thing is to make sure your sunglasses will truly protect your eyes.

And what's real protection all about? Ultraviolet light.

[Live Science](#) says, "Ultraviolet light is a type of electromagnetic radiation that makes black-light posters glow and is responsible for summer tans — and sunburns. However, too much exposure to UV radiation is damaging to living tissue."

Especially the living tissue in your eyes.

Bad Mojo

Ultraviolet light can cause or worsen a lot of conditions. For example, it:

- Increases your risk for cataracts, and their growth if you already have them.

- Hastens macular degeneration.
- Damages the center of the retina.
- Causes [pterygia](#).

Pterygia are a lesser-known result of UV light exposure. According to AllAboutVision.com, “Pterygia are benign (non-cancerous) growths, but they can permanently disfigure the eye. They also can cause discomfort and blurry vision.”

You'll know a pterygium when you see one; it's a yellow growth, often with blood vessels running through it, on the white parts of their eyes.

It's also called “surfer's eye,” but could just as well be called farmer's eye, fisherman's eye or construction worker's eye. That's because anyone who is out in the dust, sunshine and wind all the time is more at risk to develop them.

Find the Right Kind

The only real protection from UV rays is a good pair of sunglasses. So, what makes sunglasses good? What do you need to look for in your shades?

- Lenses that are bigger than a standard eyeglass lens because it covers more
- Frames with wrapped lenses that protect your eyes from light entering from the sides
- Ultraviolet light protection
- Polarization
- Backside anti-reflective

Top to Bottom Protection

Sunglasses with polarization filters block light that's reflected off of flats surfaces, like water, that generally are polarized horizontally.

One of the best ways to understand polarization is to think of a white picket fence. If there's sunlight shining from behind it, the only rays that come through are the vertical light rays. Everything else is cut.

Imagine a beam of light, which is like a tube, that has a clock dial with numbers from 1 to 12 on it, on its face. Polarized sunglasses only let the straight up and down, 12-o'clock to 6-o'clock, rays come through. Everything else is filtered out.

Backside anti-reflective coatings are important, too. When you're wearing sunglasses and the light is coming from overhead, you can get light can reflect off the inside of the sunglasses back to your eyes. A good anti-reflective on the inside will prevent that from happening.

Color Us Protected

Different tints on sunglasses have advantages in specific conditions:

Universal lenses for all kinds of conditions have copper-colored tints.

If you're in bright, bright sun, on a lake, or in the winter with the sunshine reflecting up from the ground, the best tints are dark grey.

Green tint is especially good for golf (and is, therefore, my favorite shade).

For more about tints and what outdoor activities they're best for, check out ["Your Guide to Sports Sunglass Lens Tints."](#)

For more information about UV light and protecting your eyes, check out these sources from the American Optometric Association:

- [Sunglasses: Healthy Eyes are Always in Style](#)
- [When It Comes to Sunglasses, Looks Aren't Everything](#)
- [UV Protection: Protecting Your Eyes from Solar Radiation](#)
- [Do Your Sunglasses Really Protect Your Eyes from the Sun?](#)

And don't forget, we're in the midst of our annual sunglasses sale. Get a complete pair of prescription sunglasses at a 50 percent discount through Thursday, April 12!

[LISTEN AS DR. YUNKER TALKS ABOUT SUNGLASSES AND UV PROTECTION ON 1310 KNOX & 107.9 KNOX-FM](#)

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See The World Through Our Eyes