

10 signs you might need an eye exam

One of the clearest signs that you might need glasses is the inability to read an actual sign. But there are many other clues that can reveal if your powers of observation are fading.

Roughly 60% of the world's population requires vision correction, according to the Vision Impact Institute.¹ While that's a lot of people, the good news is 80% of all visual impairment can be avoided or corrected.²

And the key to decoding whether or not you need glasses fortunately is not a mystery; it simply takes understanding the symptoms. Check out these 10 indicators it may be time for an eye exam.

1. **Fuzzy optics:** If you no longer recognize a friend 10 steps away, or your favorite magazine has become fuzzy to read close up, you may be developing **farsightedness (hyperopia) or nearsightedness (myopia)**. If it's challenging to see objects both near and far, it could be astigmatism, a common condition involving a curvature of the eye lens, or cornea.³
2. **Slight night sight:** If you can no longer make out the difference between a shrub and a dog while on your nightly walk, you may be experiencing signs of **early cataracts**. You should be examined – soon.⁴
3. **Dark to light blues:** If it takes your eyes longer to adjust after the screen goes dark in the theater, it may mean the muscles that help your irises contract and expand are weakening. It is likely age-related, as are many vision problems.⁵
4. **Computing issues:** You can try to blame it on work, but oftentimes those who struggle to read the computer after a while may be experiencing a clue to farsightedness. Experts recommend the 20-20-20 rule: look up from your computer every 20 minutes at something

¹ "The Cost of Uncorrected Vision," Jean-Félix Bioso-Duplan, The Vision Impact Institute, Oct. 24, 2014.

² "Visual impairment and blindness," World Health Organization, August 2014, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs282/en/>

³ Diseases and Conditions, Astigmatism, Mayo Clinic, <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/astigmatism/basics/definition/con-20022003>. Accessed November 2018.

⁴ "Night Vision Problems: Halos, Blurred Vision, and Night Blindness," WebMD, <http://www.webmd.com/eye-health/night-vision-problems-halos-blurred-vision-night-blindness>. Accessed November 2018.

⁵ "Growing Older and Adjusting to the Dark," by Jane Brody, The New York Times, March 13, 2007. Accessed November 2018.

20 feet away for 20 seconds. Simple, right? [Here's a fun way to keep track.](#)

5. **Eye fatigue:** Does 20 minutes of reading wear out your eyes like 1 hour did only a year ago? Eye fatigue results from blurry vision, or when you regularly squint or blink to bring items into focus, but it can also result from driving, writing or staring at your mobile phone. Try taking regular breaks and adjust the lights to reduce glare. If the fatigue persists, see your doctor.⁶
6. **Pounding temples:** Sometimes the mechanism that helps the cornea and lens focus on images fails, and the small muscles in the eye are forced to work harder. The resulting eye strain can cause [headaches](#).⁷ So if your head hurts after a lot of reading or focusing, you may need glasses.
7. **Double troubles:** Seeing two cookies when there's only one is not only disappointing, it may signal more serious issues. Seeing double may indicate problems with your cornea or eye muscles. It can also be a symptom of cataracts. Call the doctor on the double.⁸
8. **Curvy lines:** Do the blinds covering your kitchen window suddenly look like they're under water? When straight lines appear distorted or colors look faded, it may be a sign of [macular degeneration](#), the deterioration of the central portion of the retina and a leading cause of vision loss.⁹
9. **Hello halos:** If you see halos around objects, it may signal developing cataracts or [night vision](#) problems. These glowing eye halos are usually more pronounced in the dark and surround objects. Fortunately, cataract risk can be reduced with a good diet, [sunglasses](#) and no smoking.^{10,11}
10. **Pressing issues:** A sense of pressure or pushing in the back of your eye could indicate [developing glaucoma](#). Don't be alarmed – it's highly treatable. Pressure buildup can damage the optic nerve that transmits

⁶ "Eye Fatigue," WebMD, <http://www.webmd.com/eye-health/eye-fatigue-causes-symptoms-treatment#2>. Accessed November 2018.

⁷ "Could your headaches be due to eye problems?" Yoursightmatters.com. Accessed November 2018.

⁸ "Double Vision (Diplopia)," WebMD, <http://www.webmd.com/eye-health/double-vision-diplopia-causes-symptoms-diagnosis-treatment>. Accessed November 2018.

⁹ "Vision Problems," U.S. National Library of Medicine, <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003029.htm>. Accessed November 2018.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ "Nutrition and Cataracts," American Optometric Association, <http://www.aoa.org/patients-and-public/caring-for-your-vision/nutrition/nutrition-and-cataracts?sso=y>. Accessed November 2018.

images to your brain, but not everyone with eye pressure has glaucoma. Still, you should still get it checked.¹²

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¹² "Vision Problems," U.S. National Library of Medicine, <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003029.htm>. Accessed November 2018.