

Low Vision Aids - Patient information

General Comments:

Low vision aids are a useful help to ophthalmic treatments to improve vision for patients with retinal disease. After the onset of retinal disease, it is still useful to have your glasses checked by the optician as the refraction of the eye can change.

As the retina becomes damaged good lighting can help vision, particularly near vision. I recommend a Halogen light, which can be focused on the page. These can be either free standing or table based.



Halogen lights

Another good product is a magnification lens with illumination based on an angle poise system.



Angle poise system

Low Visual Aids

Low visual aids should always be prescribed by an experienced ophthalmic optician who will measure your visual performance with each type of visual aid used.

Hand Magnifiers

With poorer vision hand held magnification is sometimes helpful. The Key is again to have a good light. Many of the magnifiers have inbuilt illumination. However the more the lens magnifies the more difficult it is to read the whole word / text.



Hand held digital magnifiers cost around £3-450, however can give good magnification when shopping, reading writing cheques etc.



Stand Magnifiers

Stand magnifiers work in the same way and may be helpful for people with a hand shake, as this is made worse by the magnifier! They magnify between 2-20 times and again can come with built in light.



Monoculars / Binoculars

For distance vision Monoculars or binoculars are helpful. These are mini telescopes and can magnify between 2-10 times. Watching TV with binoculars is rewarding. However hand shake and arm ache are issues with these magnifiers and some are then mounted on spectacle frames.



Spectacle-mounted Magnifiers

Telescopes can be spectacle-mounted for near or distance work. The telescopes devices protrude from the spectacle frame, and can be used with one or both eyes, however objects should be held much closer to your eyes than normal. Some spectacles act like bifocals, allowing you to switch between near and distance vision.



Video magnifiers.

Video magnifiers get around the distortion caused by lenses and the lack of light. However they are bulky - difficult to put in a pocket, and are not to some patients taste. However they give excellent magnification, and come with colour monitors, autofocus etc. They allow some patients to view pictures as well as type.



There are many options, and I would always recommend a trial before purchase. The [RNIB](#) have great data sheets regarding these devices and the [Good Hope](#) websites is excellent.

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