

How to Choose Eyewear

By Charles Hall

Choosing glasses (even if you don't need them, you can get them with clear glass) is now all about style – glasses can make you look smart, funky, cool, elegant, retro, and yes, even add that just a little bit nerdy element. It all depends upon how daring you are.

Remember when the entire American attitude towards eyewear could be summed up in the phrase “men seldom make passes at girls who wear glasses?” When the stock in trade of romantic movies was the transformation of the “Plain Jane” by dramatically taking down her severe bun hair-do and removing her glasses and, suddenly – Ginger Rogers! Or, for boys, that moment when you overheard the girls playing “Mystery Date.” They were comparing you (and your brown horn rims) unfavorably to Poindexter, the nerd. Well, those days are, thankfully, long over – girls now have 24 different “dates” to choose from in “Mystery Date,” and eyewear – or the lack of it – is simply a fashion choice and, finally, as Bill Gates well knows, nerds are way cool.

The downside? Well, to ride the crest of the trend, you need a wardrobe of eyewear, which may set you back a few bucks – for example, a year's supply of Acuvue disposable contacts can cost anywhere from \$100 to \$175, while glasses can cost in the thousands -- more than worth it in terms of fashion impact and confidence in any situation. It all begins with a trip to the eye doctor, who not only can update your prescription and tell you of any eye problems you might have (and new ways of fixing them) but recommend specific types of eyewear which might be appropriate for you – depending upon your eyes, some types of contact lenses may work better than others, not everyone can wear the soft gel or disposable types due to particular sensitivities or other conditions. You should, however, consider contacts as a fashion choice if you've ever longed to have a different color eye – today's contact lenses come a wide variety of colors designed to either look natural or to be a bit startling in their intensity – yes, you now can have violet eyes like Elizabeth Taylor or two different colors like David Bowie. You can even buy “special effects” contacts that let you have irises with leopard spots or even cat's eyes and much, much more.

Choosing glasses (even if you don't need them, you can get them with clear glass) is now all about style – glasses can make you look smart, funky, cool, elegant, retro, and yes, even add that just a little bit nerdy element. It all depends upon how daring you are and how much you want to emphasize your eyewear choice, you can find rimless styles that are practically invisible, try matching frame shape and color to your face as most eyewear experts suggest – for a round face try narrow, flat styles, for a long thin face wider glasses may do the trick – but basically it's really about what looks good on you. For everyday wear, you might want the lightest, most unobtrusive

glasses available and, while you're at it, get a pair of prescription sunglasses to match – you'll never regret it. Then, you might want to get a pair of classic tortoiseshell frames in a pleasing shape for when you want to look particularly sharp in all senses of the word at a business meeting or on a date – studies have shown that people trust people with glasses and that final gesture at the end of the commercial when the spokesman removes his glasses and speaks directly to “you” about curing your sinus headache? Well, that can work in real life as well – try cultivating it as a gesture when you're closing your next deal.

Some don'ts for glasses? If you're only going to have one or two pairs, don't get trapped into trendy colors or shapes, since when these go out of style so do you – unless you want to waste your investment (though some eyewear outlets may give you something for your previously worn frames.) Stick with classics like the Aviator, the Wayfarer (those Ray Ban sunglasses that never go out of style) as well as wire rims and half frames – or if you're really a connoisseur, check out the Italian imports and antique frames – you might even be able to pull off pince-nez or a lorgnette (glasses on a stick.)

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