

Hints and tips on magnifiers

How can a magnifier help me with low vision?

Most people use magnifiers for reading short pieces of information, but you can use them for other tasks.

Magnifiers are ideal for tasks such as:

- > Checking TV guides
- > Reading mail
- > Cooking instructions
- > Sell by dates
- > Looking at washing machine controls and other appliances

Also, when out and about:

- > Bus timetables
- > Prices, sizes or reading a greetings card
- > Reading a menu

Typically, using magnifiers for long periods of time can be very tiring, especially when reading. It is important that you have consulted and taken professional advice from an optician. They will give you the correct strength of magnifier you need.

Different types of magnifiers

- > Handheld
- > Pocket
- > Folding
- > Dome
- > TV glasses

Information on the power and strength of magnifiers

- > Usually the strength of a magnifier is indicated by a number followed by X.
- > A larger number (e.g. 10X) has a stronger magnification.
- > The strength of the magnifier needed will depend on your level of vision.
- > Remember that the bigger the magnifier lens, the weaker it will be.
- > When using magnifiers that do not have built-in illumination, using a task light to improve light and contrast levels can help.
- > Task lighting is designed for close up tasks. When using a task light, it should be positioned in front of you, close to the activity you are carrying out.
- > You can wear your glasses if needed (you can ask your optician for guidance.)
- > Your optician may recommend you contact your local social work department for a visual impairment assessment.

When purchasing your own magnifier

- > You should seek advice from an optician on the required strength of the magnifier.
- > It is recommended that you purchase your magnifier from a reliable supplier.

If you are registered blind or partially sighted or have an underlying health condition you are entitled to one free eye test per year.