

## UV Protection And Eyewear

Welcome back everyone. This article is a follow up to the previous article on UV protection and SPF ratings. I realized it would take longer than one article to cover all of the aspects of eyewear I mentioned in last month's article. I will cover those topics in later articles mixed with other articles covering various helpful information.

Many of us overlook another important area of your body that needs protection from UV rays, your eyes. Just like you protect your skin from UV rays with sunscreen, you need to protect your eyes with sunglasses.

I will start out by saying the best protection for your eyes is a lens coating called "UV 400". This coating blocks/absorbs the damaging UV-A and UV-B rays and keeps them from entering your eyes. Unfortunately, many of the non-prescription sunglasses you find in local retail stores do not have this necessary level of protection.

Non-prescription or "over the counter" sunglasses can have very different levels of UV protection. You will see non prescription sunglasses for sale at many retail locations. How can you tell a good pair from a bad pair? The great majority of them will be labeled (if they are at all) "UV100".

What does UV100 mean? This labeling means that the sunglasses will block 100 percent of one of the two UV rays; this sounds good, right? Wrong, this is very bad situation! By blocking just one of the two UV rays, your eye will receive greater damage than a person who does not wear any sunglasses at all.

You might wonder why blocking 100% of one type would be bad. The reason this creates a bad situation is logical and simple. We know that the "UV100" sunglasses block just one of the two UV rays, but both types of UV rays are damaging to our eyes.

The UV100 sunglasses are tinted and provide relief by darkening your view in the sun. But when you are in the dark the pupils in your eye dilate (widen) to allow more light in making it easier to see. The UV100 sunglasses have the same effect upon your pupils and this is how the damage occurs.

Your pupils are dilated from the sunglasses but since they are not blocking the second UV ray, now even more of this damaging UV ray has access to your eyes. By wearing inferior sunglasses, you are actually working against your body's natural defense of protecting you by constricting your pupils in bright light. Not good!

UV ray damage to your eye is a contributor to the formation of cataracts. So, it is always good to eliminate any contributing factors that you can control.

I stated earlier in the article that it was better to not wear any sunglasses versus wearing a pair of UV100 sunglasses. The reason for this is all about the pupil and how it responds to light and dark. In bright light, your pupil constricts allowing minimal light to enter the eye and giving your eyes more protection than inferior UV100 sunglasses.

There is one brand of "off the rack" sunglasses that does offer UV400 protection that comes to mind. That brand is Foster Grant and I am sure there are other brands available. As long as the sunglasses block 100% of UV-A and UV-B you are good to go. Do your research and be an educated consumer.

The summary of this article is Do Not Wear Cheap Sunglasses!