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# Contact Lenses: Now It's Possible to See Both Near and Far

## Multifocal Contact Lenses Decrease Use of Reading and Distance Eyeglasses

By **L.L. Woodard**

For many people, especially those age 40 years and over, there is an increased difficulty with near vision which is called presbyopia. Often presbyopia occurs in addition to myopia, which is the difficulty in seeing distant objects clearly.

Until recently, the person who suffered from both presbyopia (farsightedness) and myopia (nearsightedness) had only the options of wearing bifocal lenses in their glasses or using reading glasses for near vision in addition to wearing contact lenses for improved distance vision. Thanks to the advent of multifocal contact lenses, people with both vision conditions—presbyopia and myopia—now have the option, and the freedom, to choose to wear contact lenses only to improve their vision.

As with nearly any and all medical and corrective devices, multifocal lenses don't work for whatever reason for 100% of the people who try them. It is also noted that while multifocal lenses will provide clear enough vision for three-fourths of activities of daily living, single vision glasses may still be needed for tasks such as driving or reading small print ([www.allaboutvision.com](http://www.allaboutvision.com)). If you approach the use of multifocal lenses with this information in mind, you won't be disappointed by unreasonable expectations, such as those suggested by the commercials for these products, showing people throwing away their glasses.

There are different vision-restoring power designs within the multifocal contact lenses on the market. Some of the designs have "two distinct lens powers—one for your distance vision and one for near" ([www.allaboutvision.com](http://www.allaboutvision.com)) and another type where the lens powers are more along the order of progressive lenses in eyeglasses.

Like other contact lenses, multifocal contact lenses are available in either soft or rigid gas permeable materials and are available in single use, daily wear and overnight wear. Your vision specialist should discuss your preferences and needs with you and together the two of you should be able to determine which multifocal contact lenses (if any) would be the most appropriate for your vision correction and lifestyle.

If multifocal contact lenses don't work out for you, there is still the option of using monovision contact lenses. Monovision contact lenses correct myopia (nearsightedness) in one eye—usually the dominant of your two eyes as determined by your vision specialist—and a contact lens in the non-dominant eye to correct presbyopia (farsightedness).

Disclaimer: The author is not a medical professional. This article is not intended to provide or replace any information or recommendations of a health care professional. If you experience visual difficulties, contact a health care provider.

Resources: [www.allaboutvision.com](http://www.allaboutvision.com)

<http://one.aao.org/CE/PracticeGuidelines> "Refractive errors: Medical therapy." 2007, September.

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