

Highly Adaptive

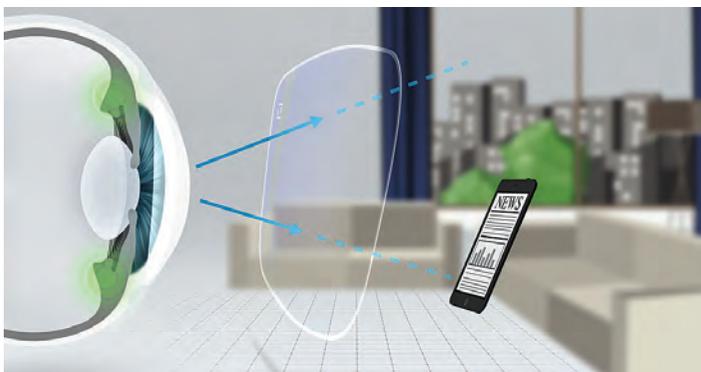
Varifocals are optical superstars: they offer near vision, distance vision and clear vision in the intermediate zone in just a single lens - and all without any perceptible transition. However, many spectacle wearers aren't aware how precisely varifocal glasses can be customised to meet their particular needs.



Essilor's Varilux X Series can now deliver the 'extended arms length vision.'

It's fair to say that the British addiction to all things digital is good news for opticians when it comes to selling varifocals. "As the population ages and lives longer, we ask more of our eyes. We now 'read' TV screens, we own smart phones, digital devices, laptops and PCs and we often read electronic books. These are all near vision tasks and they are all slightly different. Different posture, different reading position and a variety of fonts and typefaces on screens all add to the challenge," says Mark Marland, Sales Director, Optimum RX Lens Specialists.

ZEISS Digital Inside Technology accommodates the use of digital devices into daily lives. It features an optimised lens design for a multi tasking, digital lifestyle. By taking into account the different reading distances for digital devices (35 cm) and print media (38 cm), the location and size of the near zone facilitates natural reading in both formats. ZEISS Precision Technology includes: Clear Optics, with ZEISS precision in every process step, Dynamic Optics; the ZEISS Design Philosophy based on the simulation of binocular vision and Thin Optics, with ZEISS Lens Aesthetics providing the best balance between optics and thin and lightweight lenses.

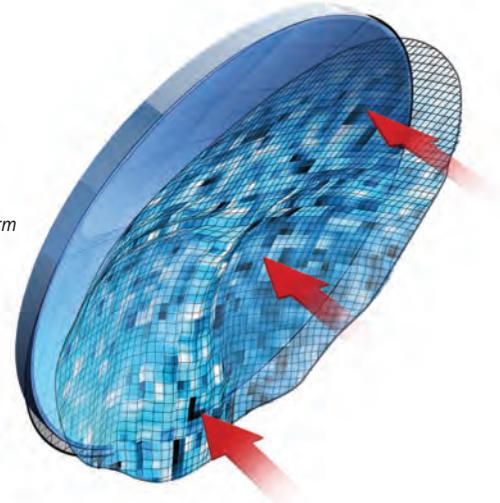


Digital Inside Technology by ZEISS

Patient Benefits

Yet old dispensing habits can die-hard and if a patient is happy with their bifocals why take a risk by moving them to varifocals? "Things have moved on significantly over the years and bifocal wearers can successfully adapt to varifocals and enjoy enhanced vision. It's for exactly this reason that manufacturers offer a guarantee against non-tolerance. New designs such as Varilux X-series have a very high adaptation rate and many bifocal wearers have successfully switched. Today, the patient benefits outweigh the risk and dispensers need to embrace the change," says Andy Hepworth, Professional Relations Manager, Essilor. And of course benefits extend beyond digital solutions with lenses for driving, sport and work. ZEISS DriveSafe Lenses deal with the three most common visual challenges experienced by drivers: perceived glare, difficult light conditions and visual comfort. DriveSafe Lens design makes it easier for progressive lens wearers to quickly refocus between the road, dashboard and mirrors. It also features optimised distance and intermediate viewing zones, reducing the need for horizontal head movement.

Optimum RX Lens Specialists has invested heavily in freeform production using the latest Digital Ray-Path technology to cater for this demanding market.



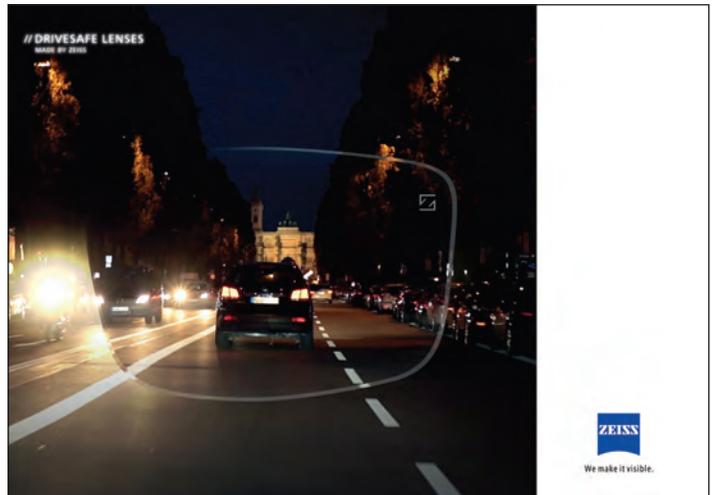
Cost Issues

Money, so often cited in the past as a factor holding this sector back from broader appeal, seems to be less of an issue. "Within the independent sector there has been an interesting movement into premium Varilux designs, with Varilux S-series being the most dispensed during the last two years," says Hepworth. Marland agrees: "Do patients always buy the cheapest everything? The cheapest cars, shoes, clothes, houses? Do patients want value for money? If the patient says: 'That's expensive' are they actually saying: 'I don't see the value in that.' Give the patient as many benefits of the product as you can. Their trust in the ECPs professionalism will do the rest."

And in any case, as Hepworth of Essilor points out, cost should never be used as a reason not to make the best product recommendation for any given wearer. "If it's the best solution, it should be offered. There are many offers available on the market and there is usually a solution that incorporates quality and price sensitivity," he says.

Communication

For Marland then, the main challenge the ECP faces is communication. "In order to do the very best for the patient they need to understand all the options open to them, to be able to explain complex issues in simple, jargon free terms," he explains. It's true that interpreting prescriptions and understanding individual lifestyle needs is not always easy and can be time consuming. "More often than not the patient has chosen the frame with little or no regard for the lens, use or lifestyle, but because it looks good they simply want it. The more



ZEISS DriveSafe Lenses tackle night time glare

measurements the optician takes, the less likely they will have a complaint," says Marland.

And according to Hepworth of Essilor, fitting shouldn't take any longer than usual for standard designs. "There is a small amount of additional time needed for personalisation options which can include the new 'Near Vision Behaviour,' such as with the Varilux X series. This latest technique takes into account a wearer's behaviour and posture while reading, ensuring the arm's length vision the lens delivers is positioned exactly where they need it," he says.

Looking Forward

Luckily technology in this sector is constantly evolving and improving, a good thing as the consumer becomes ever more demanding. "Lifestyle demands and cultural changes mean that people expect more from their eyewear. Driving, reading, sports vision, occupational dispensing all need different solutions that's why Optimum invested heavily in freeform production using the latest Digital Ray-Path technology to cater for this ever changing and demanding market," says Marland.

Taking all these considerations into account, the future should be bright for this lens sector. "I am convinced lined multi-focals will be replaced evermore within the UK market with varifocals," says Hepworth. Marland adds: "Many developments today are niche, but many are not. The ECP who waits for people to choose their products and services will be at a distinct disadvantage to the ECP, who has a vision for their business, an idea of who their ideal client is and how to go about it. There are plenty of lens makers offering a wide range of products. Once upon a time it used to be 'here is the product, now go and sell it.' Today people who need a correction choose to come to you and you can say: "We have a lens for that." ♦