

## Men's Eyewear: Function Meets Fashion

When it comes to choosing a new pair of glasses, men and women work from a completely different checklist. Style tops the list for most women, but comfort, fit and durability are the top priorities for most men.

“When we help men choose eyewear, they know what they want, and their focus is not typically on the latest designer style. Women, however, often know exactly which designer frame they want before they even have come in for their eye exam,” says optometrist Dr. Mel Gehrig, with The Eye Clinic and Optics Unlimited. “It’s not that style doesn’t matter to men, they just aren’t willing to sacrifice comfort and fit for the sake of fashion.”

A recent Vision Council of America (VCA) survey backs this up. Eight-eight percent of the males who responded to the survey said the comfort and fit of their glasses were the most important factors in choosing a frame, with 59 percent saying the durability of their eyewear was most important to them.

Dr. Gehrig says men may know what they want from their eyewear, but they don’t always know what features to look for to ensure their new glasses will meet their requirements. He and the opticians at Optics Unlimited offer some guidelines to help men choose eyewear that will be comfortable, fit well, and be tough and long-lasting.

“With men, temple width is a big issue,” says Dr. Gehrig. “To ensure that the temples don't rub against the side of the head, make sure the frames are wide enough for your face. The edge of the frames should extend slightly beyond your face so that the temples don’t touch your head.”

Next, make sure the temples are long enough. Frame styles can typically be ordered in a variety of temple lengths. Dr. Gehrig explains that the curve at the end of the temple should extend over the ear without pressing down upon it. The optician can reshape and adjust the curve at the end of the temple, but they can't make the temples shorter or longer. “That’s why it is so important to make sure you select the best temple length when you choose your frames.”

He also advises checking the nosepiece for comfort and fit. Many glasses have adjustable nose pads to fine-tune the fit. For frames without adjustable nose pads, make sure the fit is secure without pinching your bridge.

“When you try on the frames, there are a few things you can do to make sure you have a good fit that will feel just as good in real life situations as they do in the optical store,” says Dr. Gehrig. “Move your head up and down, and side to side. Then bend over and pick up something from the floor and see how well your glasses stay in place. With the properly adjusted nose pads and temples, your glasses should stay in place without touching your face regardless of how you move your head around.”

Dr. Gerhig says for men who want eyeglasses that are more durable than usual, frames made from titanium, stainless steel and flexible materials, such as Flexon, should be considered. Titanium and stainless steel are stronger and more durable than other metal frame materials, and Flexon, a titanium-based alloy, will go back into its original shape even if you twist, bend or abuse it in just about any way.

Dr. Gehrig says men can get all the things they want in eyewear – comfort, fit and durability – and still choose a frame that is stylish. “It’s doesn’t have to be one or the other. Men can get what they want and still get eyewear that adds to their personal style.”

Men's frame styling today has become much more masculine with older shapes and sizes reemerging with fresh, modern twists. The classics are back, but designers are using new materials and innovations to make the modern looks more functional in order to give men what they want.

For more information about eyewear for men, stop by any location of Optics Unlimited in Lake Charles, Sulphur, DeRidder or Jennings.

**Sidebar: Top eyewear fashion looks for men:**

**Masculine shapes:** Aviator glasses and double brow-bar styles are back, but made with newer and more enduring materials.

**Larger and bolder eye sizes and frame shapes:** The biggest styles balance better with larger body types. The small, John Lennon glasses are still around, and they still work well with smaller faces

**Rimless and semi-rimless styles:** Lightweight comfort that provides a modern or minimalist look.

**Metal frames:** Because titanium is super lightweight, non-corrosive, very durable and stylish, titanium frames rate high in both the function and fashion categories. Other options such as stainless steel and aluminum are also popular and have lightweight and durable properties when formed into a frame.

**Plastic frames:** Plastic provides a younger, hip or retro look, Lightweight and comfortable, plastic frames come in a wide variety of styles, including thin plastics, bold, black '50s-style frames and layers of colored plastics laminated together to create a unique effect. Classic shapes in tortoise patterns are also likely to remain in style forever