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How do our eyes smile?

Whether we are wearing spectacles or not, our eyes are a significant factor in how we communicate. Here are our top 3 tips for spectacles wearers to achieve smiling eyes.

Laughing is good for us – because a really good laugh uses as many as 100 muscles in our body and face. Eye contact and smiling eyes also significantly facilitate our communication with other people. But how can we get our eyes looking their best? How can eyeglass lenses help our eyes when smiling?

A look is one of our most important means of communication. Our eyes reflect our feelings, in particular our liking and aversion, towards the person we are talking to. This happens extremely quickly, and to a large extent it involves subconscious perception. Eye contact is the bridge in our conversations which makes it easier for us to convey information.

In many everyday situations such as at work or when getting to know new people, it is very important to appear spontaneously likeable. We want to create a pleasant atmosphere in our conversation and our eyes play a significant role in this. If we can manage to get them to smile in a relaxing way, this will enable us to overcome any awkwardness. Although, this is by no means easy, especially in stressful situations, you can train yourself: put aside your stress and concerns at least for a short time, and concentrate on getting your eyes to smile. Communication trainers even advise people to practice this in front of a mirror.

Genuine smiling eyes

Is every smile really genuine? The American researcher Paul Ekman has studied how people smile. He observed which facial muscles are active in which smiles, and consequently defined 19 different kinds of smile. However, only one of the 19 laughing facial expressions is truly genuine and it is not just produced out of politeness, embarrassment or even anxiety. In fact, our orbicularis oculi muscle

is the real star of this honest laugh. The orbicularis oculi muscle causes us to pinch our eyes together, and displays the laughter lines at the corners of our eyes. Indeed, Ekman even gave this smile a special name in his research: the Duchenne smile – after the neurologist Guillaume Duchenne who first examined this muscle in 1862. Why not look out for it sometime?

What does this mean for glasses wearers?

People can read our true feelings from our face instinctively. A likeable smile is conveyed not just by the position of the corners of our mouth, but also quite decisively by our eyes. At the same time, the person we are talking to can tell just from our eyes whether our laugh is honest and if we are feeling happy.

As a spectacles wearer, this represents a particular challenge because our old friend, our spectacles, is situated in the way of the eye contact.

Here are the top 3 tips for spectacles wearers to achieve smiling eyes:

1. Spectacles with anti-reflective coating for a clear view

Our lenses play a quite decisive role in our smile – and not as you might assume because of how the frames look. The person we are talking to needs to see our eyes as clearly as possible. For instance, the lenses must not have an unpleasant mirror effect. Our tip: A

> [high-performance anti-reflective coating](#) is very important for us to be able to show our eyes as naturally as possible to the person we are talking to.

2. Thin slender plastic lenses for a great look

Lenses with high prescription strength can significantly alter how our eyes look. The greater the level of visual impairment is, the thicker and heavier the lenses that are normally needed. People who are long-sighted and use positive lenses have spectacles which are thick and outward-curving. These spectacles make their eyes look larger. Short-sighted people, on the other hand, use negative lenses and their eyes appear smaller. Both of these effects can put the eyes of the spectacles wearer at a disadvantage. As a result, their smile might not appear as natural as it should. Our tip:

> [Highly refractive, special plastic materials and optimised lens designs](#) can make eyeglass lenses comfortably light and thin. This avoids unwanted effects and the size of your eyes appears more natural for the observer.

3. Sunglasses are a communication killer:

They are a cool, fashionable accessory and a pleasant and effective way of not being dazzled by bright sunlight: Everyone knows that > [sunglasses](#) are an important way for us to protect our eyes against strong sunlight. However, they put a real damper on communication during an important conversation, for example. The person we are talking to can no longer detect the quite decisive signals from eye contact and the expression in our eyes. It is possible that our counterpart might find this quite unpleasant. Our tip: for an important conversation, retreat to the shade and push up your sunglasses elegantly onto your brow or pop them back in their case.

What if you don't have your "normal" spectacles with you? We have something that could help: For those who need to use their visual aid all the time and do not wish to carry two pairs of spectacles around, self-tinting lenses such as the new PhotoFusion from ZEISS could be helpful. These eyeglass lenses change from bright to tinted and back again even faster than before.

Laughter is one of our body's most natural responses, not only in amusing and funny situations, but also to express a sense of relief after overcoming problems, or as a highly effective self-defence mechanism when conflicts threaten. Laughter is simply good for us!

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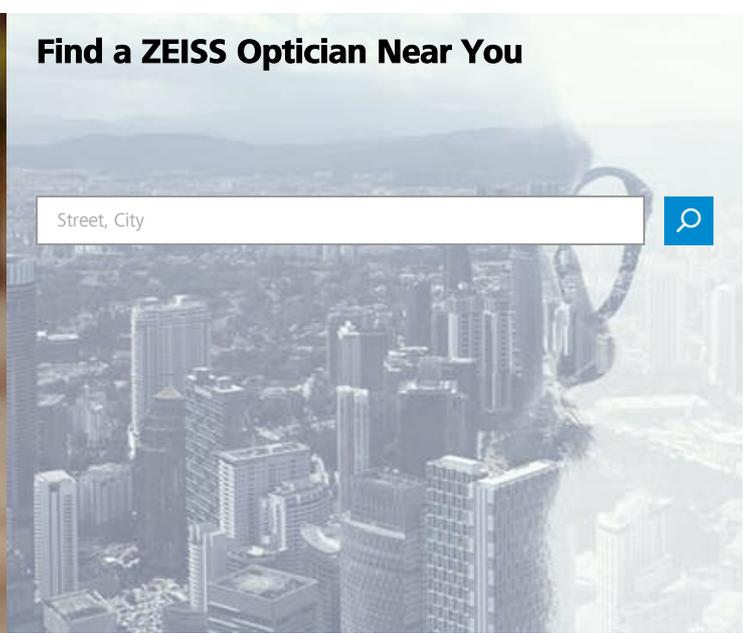
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