

EYE-Q

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When You're Cool the Sun Shines On You 24 Hours a Day

This is the final installment on outdoor vision protection in recognition of May as National Sight Saving and UV Awareness month. Over the past few weeks I explained many of the common problems that may befall the unprotected eye from UV radiation and the different types of coatings commonly found on sunglasses. Today I will explain the value and purpose of different colors used in tinting sunglasses and how they can enhance your visual experience while protecting your eyes.

There are a number of factors that go into the selection of lens colors in sunglasses. The most common consideration, though not the most important, is "How do I look in this color?" Certainly, looking cool may be just as important as protecting your eyes, but it may compromise the quality of your vision at the same time. Here are the most common tint colors and their advantages.

- Smoke (grey) lenses offer maximum glare reduction without distorting colors
- Light Rust lenses filter out blue light rays which are the chief components of glare and haze. They enhance contrast in medium to low light conditions.
- Smoke green lenses give maximum glare reduction without distorting colors. Work well for general daytime use.
- Coral pink lenses improve detail and enhance depth perception when encountering low or artificial lighting conditions.
- Bronze brown lenses provide superior visual definition, increase contrast and enhance ground level contours in most lighting conditions.
- Copper lenses curb glare and enhance contrast of colors over a wide range of environments.
- Yellow lenses are good for overcast and low light conditions to increase the contrast between similar looking objects. In addition they enhance contrast against a bright blue sky.
- Blue lenses are ideal for bright light conditions because they increase contrast by filtering out yellow light to enhance clarity.
- Violet lenses absorb green light and provide better tracking of objects where there is a lot of grass and trees.

As you can see, there is a great selection of colors that have overlapping value in enhancing the visual experience. It is important to match the tint of your sunglasses with the activity for which you will use them. You want to enhance your depth perception and color recognition by finding the right combination of tints and coatings that strike the perfect balance between light transmission, light absorption and light reflection.

The use of polarizing, antireflective coatings and mirrors in combination with your tint will have an additive affect on the amount of light transmitted through the lens and therefore the overall affect to your vision. Be sure to take these additions into consideration when selecting the perfect sunglasses for your active or not so active lifestyle. You may find that more than one pair of sunglasses are needed to allow you to take maximum advantage of your active lifestyle. What works best on the golf course or at the beach may not be optimal for jogging or hiking. The pilot may not like the quality of vision or appreciate the wind protection afforded by the appropriate sunglasses for the motorcycle rider.

The main thing to remember about optical sun wear is protection of the eyes means more comfort for you and a greater enjoyment of your outdoor activities. So get out there and enjoy all that the season has to offer and by the way, don't forget the sunscreen.

If you have questions about your eye health e-mail Dr. Barowsky at doctom@tdkj.com and we'll try to answer your questions here at Eye-Q.