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OCTOBER 2024 • VOL. 42 • NO. 9

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- Vision Therapy:
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HOYA
FOR THE VISIONARIES

As a thrilling summer of Olympic sports comes to an end, our focus shifts to a critical aspect of athletic performance that is often overlooked — sports eyewear. In the world of sports, eyewear is more than just an accessory — it's a tool that can enhance performance, ensure safety, and boost confidence.

This month's issue is dedicated to the intersection of vision and sports, showcasing not only the latest in medal-worthy frame styles but also addressing an urgent health concern: the prevalence of concussions and their often-overlooked impact on vision.

Concussions can lead to a host of visual symptoms, including blurred vision, double vision, and light sensitivity, which can severely impact an athlete's ability to perform as well as function in their day-to-day lives. As eye care professionals, your role in recognizing and addressing these issues is more vital than ever.

In our very first case study, feature writer David Goldberg documents the journey of Rebecca Lacorte as she searches for relief from her post-concussion symptoms with Neurolens, a revolutionary lens technology designed to alleviate the visual issues associated with concussions.

This month's Biz Med feature by Evra Taylor explores a fascinating and controversial topic that has caught everyone's attention. The popular use of semaglutide for weight loss, which has demonstrated a potential link to non-arteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy (NAION). This condition typically affects one eye at a time and can lead to vision loss.

Meanwhile, David Goldberg speaks with Canadian Olympic shooter Lynda Kiejko, about the importance of precise prescrip-

"We have another tool, which allows us to do something different, in our own offices, that can improve the quality of our patient's lives."

- DR. SHALU PAL, Speaking about Neurolens

tions. It's a fascinating read that delves into the precise science behind the unusual-looking glasses worn by Olympic shooters.

Lastly, this month's Style Eyes highlights some of the most advanced and stylish sports eyewear on the market today. Inspired by Olympians, these frames are designed to perform as hard as the athletes who wear them, with cutting-edge technologies that cater to the specific demands of different sports.

We hope this issue equips you with the knowledge and tools to support your patients, whether they're elite athletes or weekend warriors. With the right eyewear and the right care, we can help them see clearly and perform at their best — both on and off the field.

Thank you for your dedication to advancing eye health and vision care. Here's to a winning season!



SUZANNE LACORTE

Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

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Christopher John Rogers debuts the Linden, his first sunglasses in collaboration with Andy Wolf. The oversized geometric D-frame, inspired by mid-century silhouettes, blends high-octane glamour with American pragmatism. Crafted from sustainable acetate with ZEISS lenses, the unisex style comes in four bold colors, reflecting CJR's signature vibrant aesthetic.

For more information, contact your Andy Wolf representative or visit: christopherjohnrogers.com as well as andy-wolf.com

Fresh LOOKS

Keep your eyewear options fresh with the latest models from these leading companies



“

Crafted for the stylish and confident modern woman who effortlessly blends trends with timeless sophistication.

STUART WEITZMAN

Stuart Weitzman debuts its Eyewear Collection for Fall/Winter 2024 with 24 optical styles, blending timeless sophistication and modern trends. Crafted from luxurious acetate, metal, or mixed materials, the frames feature elegant designs, including subtle embellishments like pearls and crystals. Produced in collaboration

with Safilo Group, the collection showcases square and cat-eye shapes in a sophisticated color palette inspired by Weitzman's iconic footwear. Available at select opticians in October 2024, the sunglasses will launch in Spring 2025.

For more information, contact your Safilo representative or visit: mysafilo.com

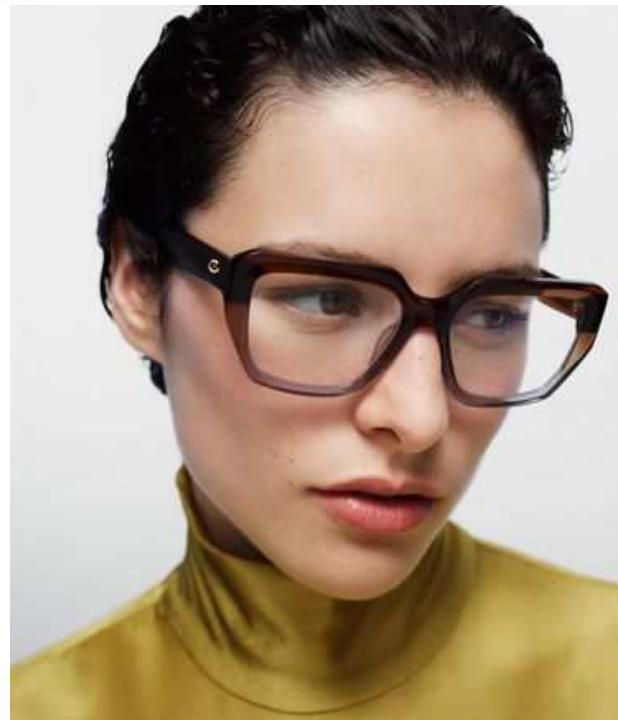


LINDA FARROW

Linda Farrow's Spring/Summer 2025 campaign, The Talisman: Power of Woman, explores feminine empowerment through a mystical journey of two women discovering their inner strength. Inspired by the Evil Eye talisman, the collection's frames act as shields against negative energy. The 2025 collection introduces 16 new

sunglass and optical styles, blending mystique and protection with refined materials and superior craftsmanship. Crafted by Japanese artisans, each design reflects the brand's pioneering vision of sophistication and luxury.

For more information, contact your Linda Farrow representative or visit: lindafarrow.com



Clemence

GIGI STUDIOS

The new Vanguard Optical collection by GIGI STUDIOS, features unique gradient acetates, developed through meticulous trials to achieve perfect shades. With daring shapes, lightweight acetates, and innovative technical advancements like new hinges and engraved logos, the collection combines a feminine and vanguardist aesthetic, offering an expanded range of colors for bestsellers.

For more information, contact your GIGI Studios representative or visit: gigistudios.com

FRESH LOOKS

ØRGREEN OPTICS

Ørgreen Optics introduces three new acetate models: MUSE, MYSTIQUE, and CANDY CANE XS. These frames blend Scandinavian minimalism with bold colorways and refined details, showcasing Ørgreen's commitment to craftsmanship and design innovation. Offering a mix of timeless elegance and modern flair, each piece is crafted for comfort and style, catering to both fashion-forward and classic eyewear enthusiasts. Available now at selected retailers and online, these models elevate any eyewear collection.

For more information, contact your Ørgreen representative or visit: orgreenoptics.com



BLACKFIN

Blackfin launches its fall collection with a minimalist aesthetic, emphasizing clean geometric lines and expert Italian craftsmanship. The Atlantic frames, also available as sunglasses, feature thinner fronts without losing their bold character. The Pacific collection debuts oversized women's styles, while Blackfin One introduces elegant feminine shapes, like the hexagonal Avalon. Vibrant colors are hand-applied to elevate each frame. Equipped with innovative LitePads nose pads and flexible titanium arms, these frames ensure a comfortable, world-fit design for all face types.

For more information, contact your Mood Eyewear representative or visit: moodeyewear.com

SELKIRK

Zeal Optics introduces Selkirk, its first plant-based glacier sunglasses. Designed for alpine adventures and everyday wear, Selkirk features a Z-Resin frame, removable panels, and Ellume Polarized lenses with 99.9% polarization and blue light filtration. Available in three colors, these eco-friendly sunglasses offer durability, style, and top-tier performance.

For more information, contact your Zeal Optics representative or visit: zealoptics.com



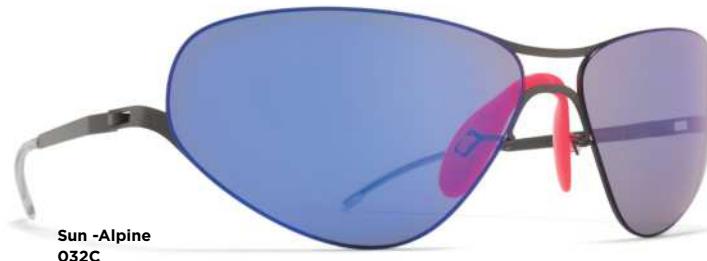


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FRESH LOOKS



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OTP

Elevate your style with OTP's latest eco-conscious eyewear collection. This bold, trendy lineup features new designs crafted from recycled acetate and biodegradable materials. OTP-189's striking cat-eye frame showcases custom lamination for a contrasting color effect, with options like Black Tort Sage and Tortoise Oat Milk. For men, OTP-191 features timeless rectangular frames with subtle detailing, while OTP-192's chunky square design brings a modern edge. Available in various finishes, these frames balance sustainability and fashion for today's eco-conscious consumer.

For more information, contact your WestGroupe representative or visit: westgroupe.com

MYKITA

The MYKITA | 032c ALPINE sunglasses blend high fashion with a sports-inspired design. Crafted from lightweight stainless steel, the sleek wraparound frames feature MYKITA's LESSRIM construction, where ultra-fine rims disappear into curved lenses. The distinct temple design enhances the aerodynamic look, accentuated by a secure rubber sports nose pad. Available in Glossy Gold, Shiny Graphite, and Black PVD, each colorway offers a unique style, with Mirror Flash lenses for a bold finish or monochrome black for a classic feel.

For more information, contact your Mykita representative or visit: mykita.com



OTP-189



OTP-192



Pattie

Karl

2BB

The 2BB optical collection blends style and functionality with 16 designs, each in three colors. The women's sleek acetate frames feature trend-driven shapes, while the men's collection integrates memory metal for a lightweight, fashion-forward look. Sizes range from 50-54, and braille on the temple tips, representing "BROTHERS," adds a tactile touch. Proceeds support blindness research, as founders Bryan & Bradford Manning say, "Eyeglasses don't cure blindness, but these just might."

For more information, contact your Centennial Optical representative or visit: centennialoptical.com



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Medal Worthy Styles

Discover the latest Olympic-worthy sports frames, merging cutting-edge style and technology for peak athletic performance

BY SUZANNE LACORTE



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.

1. Oakley's QNTM KATO 2. Nike Athena Road Tint 3. Adidas Sport Dunamis 4. SunGod Limited Edition McLaren Formula 1 Team Vulcans™ 5. Smith's Reverb ChromaPop 6. ROKA's Torino 2.0
OPPOSITE: Oakley Sphaera Inner Spark





Road to Recovery

BY DAVID GOLDBERG

Rebecca Lacorte's life changed dramatically on a winter day in December 2019 — a tobogganing accident left her with a concussion that would haunt her for years.

Her head struck a fence post, and the world went dark.

"I blacked out for about 15 seconds," says Lacorte. "When I came to, I was surrounded by my friends, and the next thing I remember was a paramedic shining a light in my eyes and asking me to repeat a set of numbers. That was the first thing I could recall after the impact."

Despite the seriousness of the injury, Lacorte didn't seek immediate medical attention. As time passed, she struggled with severe headaches and light sensitivity along with other lingering symptoms. These invisible challenges began to take a toll on her academic career and even daily activities became a battle.

"I don't think I let myself heal the way I was supposed to," says Lacorte. "I felt hopeless and the only way to deal with the constant headaches was to sit in darkness as much as possible."

For years, Lacorte sought answers — physiotherapy, special screen covers on her laptop — but traditional treatments failed to help. Then, in 2023, she encountered a new possibility.

Lacorte, *Optical Prism*'s social media coordinator, was collecting content at Vision-Expo West in Las Vegas when she stopped by the Neurolens booth. As she learned how the technology could potentially help with her concussion symptoms, she felt hopeful for the first time in nearly four years.

How Neurolens works

Neurolens addresses a common but often overlooked issue: eye misalignment. While most people associate misaligned eyes with conditions like strabismus, Neurolens targets subtle misalignments — known as micro misalignments — that can cause symptoms such as headaches, neck pain, eye strain, and even dizziness.

“For concussion patients, it’s an extra tool in our toolbox to help them. For our general patients, we are able to treat physical and visual symptoms that might otherwise have been overlooked. We have seen great results with patients like Rebecca, who has struggled for years without a solution,” says Dr. Shalu Pal, Lacorte’s optometrist at Dr. Shalu Pal & Associates in Toronto.

Lacorte’s Neurolens experience began with a visit to Pal’s modern and welcoming clinic, where she reviewed the seven symptom questions designed to help determine if a patient is a good candidate. On a scale of one to five, Lacorte was asked to rate her frequency of headaches, discomfort, light sensitivity, neck pain, eye strain, motion sickness and dry eyes.

“The symptom questionnaire tells me more about my patients than I may not have thought to ask about,” says Pal. “When I see these symptoms, I dive deeper to find out more, and when patients score higher than a 3 — on 1 or more symptoms — I know they could be a great candidate for Neurolens.”

Next, Lacorte was fitted with the Neurolens Measurement Device (N3), which precisely measures the degree of misalignment in a patient’s eyes. The headset’s design is compact, lightweight and mimics the aesthetic of the latest recreational VR headsets.

The Neurolens test involves tracking how the eyes move and focus on different objects or patterns displayed inside the headset. This may include dots, lines, or other shapes that the patient is instructed to follow or focus on.

“The whole process only took four or five minutes — it was the quickest thing ever,” says Lacorte.

Her data was then used to create custom lenses that include a contoured prism, designed to reduce the strain caused by the misalignment. The contoured prism design varies the corrective power depending on the distance of focus, providing relief for both near and far vision activities.

Lacorte also had to find the perfect pair of frames for her new lenses. For this story, Eredità Eyewear provided the frames for her treatment and Lacorte went to spend an afternoon trying on frames with the company’s chief operating officer, Nick Longstaff.

“I needed something really light because of my concussion symptoms,” says Lacorte. “The Eredità team helped me try on so many frames until I found what I think are the lightest frames ever made.”



The Neurolens Measurement Device (N3) is a light-weight and compact diagnostic tool that can evaluate a patient’s eyes in a matter of minutes.

Lacorte chose the Mita Frames MIO1036 in gravel/amber gold; she then delivered them to Pal’s office where they were fitted with her Neurolens lenses and were ready within a few days.

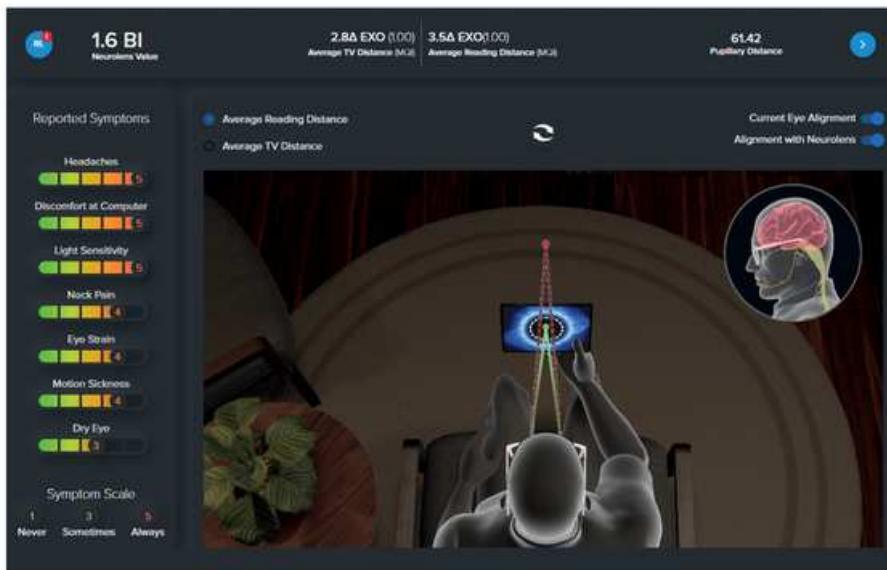
Like many patients trying a new treatment, Lacorte faced initial skepticism. The first few weeks of wearing Neurolens weren’t perfect. Lacorte experienced some minor dizziness, but she persevered, wearing the glasses for longer and longer each day, and within a month, the story began to change.

“The last few weeks, I noticed a significant drop in my headaches,” says Lacorte. “I typically get them once a day, but I haven’t experienced any recently. Also, the weight of my glasses is not bothering me as much.”

“Rebecca is wearing the lenses consistently and doesn’t want to be without them,” says Pal.

“She still has some fatigue, which is expected after only a few short weeks of wear. After many hours of continuous work, she will need to take a visual break, which includes removing her glasses, closing her eyes, and giving them some well-deserved rest.”

Lacorte is also looking to get her next pair of Neurolens frames, but this time in sunglass form, so she never has to be without them.



The results of Rebecca Lacorte’s Neurolens exam done by Dr. Shalu Pal.



How Neurolens can benefit your practice

Neurolens can be life-changing for some patients, like Lacorte, and the technology is also driving change for ECPs.

"We screen every patient, looking for symptoms that we may not uncover during our initial case history conversation with the patient," says Pal.

"If symptoms are high enough, we consider Neurolens."

Practices are seeing an opportunity to boost per-patient revenue by offering the only proven therapeutic solution for the painful

symptoms of eye misalignment. With the increasing strain on eyes from prolonged use of electronic devices, the demand for such treatments is growing rapidly, as more patients report experiencing these symptoms.

That's a lot of patients who may have been referred to another clinic in the past.

"We have another tool, which allows us to do something different, in our own offices, that can improve the quality of our patient's lives. It's very rewarding to have the ability to make our patients more comfortable in their daily tasks," says Pal. **OP**

ECPs Share Their Neurolens Success Stories

At Pal's Toronto clinic, two optometry professionals are wearing Neurolens every day. Both have faced significant visual challenges from concussion symptoms and DVS.

Mackenzie Crouse, an optometric technician, first encountered Neurolens while working at a clinic in New Brunswick. She had been struggling with light sensitivity, headaches and difficulty tracking while reading on a computer. In 2020, she tried Neurolens, and after a brief adjustment period, Crouse was impressed with the results.

"They are outstanding. Everything is perfectly clear. The biggest thing I noticed when switching back and forth between my old pair and my new pair is the new lenses make everything so crisp," says Crouse.

Katie Dickson, a senior technician at Dr. Pal's clinic has a history of multiple concussions over the past four years, including a serious bicycle accident in 2020 that left her with chronic headaches, neck pain and photophobia. While on the road to recovery through various treatments, Dickson tried Neurolens.

"I was rather impressed. My adaptation period was very short — shockingly so," says Dickson.

"When I first received them, I felt a slight pulling sensation but that dissipated within an hour."

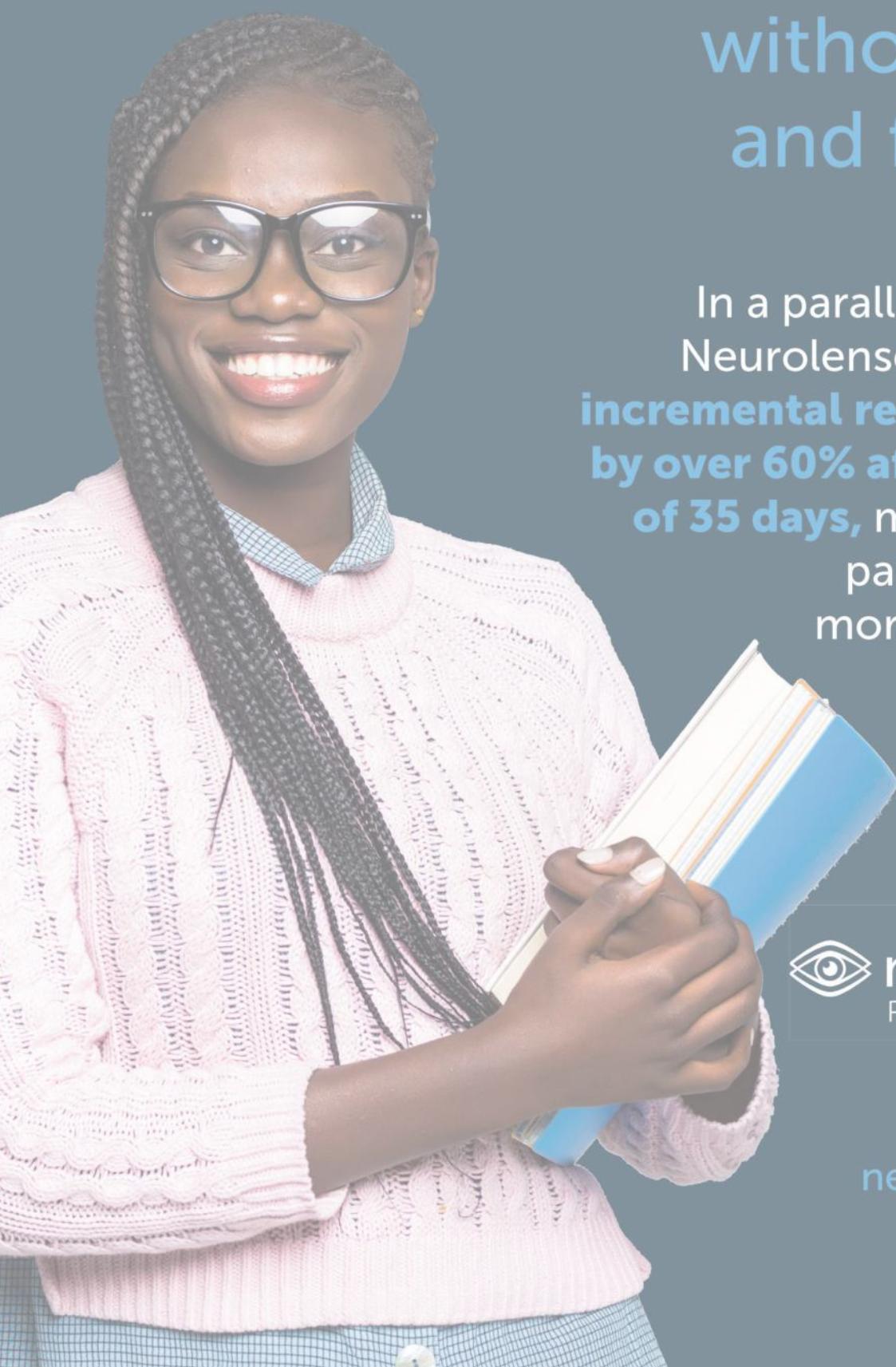
In addition to easing her headaches and making screen time more comfortable, Dickson noticed an immediate improvement in her posture. "My posture was also different right away. I have very good posture and am very athletic, but I felt taller when I started to wear them, and my colleagues actually commented."

Both ECPs believe that Neurolens have been an important part of their recovery.

"Neurolens is a very helpful tool to minimize and manage tougher days," says Dickson.

Josie, 19

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Two Blind Brothers

Brothers in Arms Work to Eliminate Blindness

BY EVRA TAYLOR

“Eyeglasses don't cure blindness, but these just might!” exclaimed Bradford and Bryan Manning, two blind brothers whose life mission and passion is to find a cure for blindness.

This past September, Centennial Optical proudly announced its new partnership with Two Blind Brothers (2BB) to launch their ophthalmic frame collection in Canada.

The Manning brothers are on a mission to cure blindness and to this end, they are donating 100% of profits from their products toward finding a cure for blindness. Through their luxury clothing brand and Shop Blind Challenge, to date, they have donated \$1.7 million to support organizations like Foundation Fighting Blindness and other clinical retinal research organizations to advance therapies and cures for blinding retinal diseases.

This mission is close to their hearts as both brothers were diagnosed with Stargardt disease at a very young age, causing them to lose their vision over time. “This collection brings us back to the beginning of our journey, in a dispensary, to now be the brand dedicated to helping others achieve better vision. This is the greatest gift we could imagine” stated the brothers.

After posting a YouTube video in 2016 announcing their launch, the brothers



said, “In the last year, we went from selling our first shirt to our high school physics teacher to one of the fastest-growing cause-driven companies in the country”. When they released a video on Facebook, the pair received an overwhelming response rate, including from others with Stargardt disease, thanking them for raising public awareness about the condition and their cause. “It was unbelievable to see the comments and messages. It was shocking and amazing.”

Centennial Optical is thrilled to join Two Blind Brothers by launching their innovative eyewear collection that not only epitomizes a harmonious blend of fashion and functionality but also carries a profound philanthropic message at its core and the commitment to make a difference by contributing a portion of the sales towards finding a cure for blindness.

“Centennial Optical is proud to be on this journey with 2BB. Their mission is also our passion”, said Allen Nightingale, president of Centennial Optical. “For over 57 years, we've been helping eyecare professionals provide their patients with the best vision solutions possible. Together let's take another big step and take up this challenge. Centennial Optical is committed to donating 10% of every 2BB frame sale to Fighting Blindness Canada, the largest charitable funder of vision research in Canada.”

Centennial Optical views this collaboration as a tangible way of making a positive impact within the optical industry, by offering their customers a purposeful product they can be proud to dispense. This is more than just a frame collection, it's a collective effort to actively help individuals with vision impairment. Centennial Optical invites their customers to explore the collection, share this inspiring story and encourage their patients to join the movement, making a difference in both the optical community and the lives of the blind and visually impaired.

The 2BB optical collection marries style and functionality, with a range encompassing 16 styles, each available in three captivating colors. The women's collection boasts sleek acetate, showcasing trend-driven, easy-wearing shapes and fashionable combinations. The men's collection incorporates memory metal in every silhouette, ensuring a lightweight, fashion-forward attitude. With sizes ranging from 50-54 across the collection, each frame offers a tactile “feel” with braille on the temple tips of each frame, meaning the number “2” or the letter “B”, represents “BROTHERS”, while also making a difference toward finding a cure for blindness.

The collection is set to be released in Canada in early November 2024. **OP**



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Two-time Olympian Lynda Kiejko says eye care is critical to her craft on the shooting range.



PRECISION PRESCRIPTIONS

The science behind competitive shooting

BY DAVID GOLDBERG

Those unusual-looking glasses worn by Olympic shooters often catch the attention of spectators. With a single lens, blinders and an adjustable mechanism, they almost look like something out of a science fiction movie. But behind the odd appearance lies a precise science designed to help athletes maintain focus and accuracy in the most intense moments of competition.

In competitions, such as the recently concluded Paris 2024 Olympic Games, the specialized glasses that most Olympic shooters wear consist of three main parts. First, a lens fits over the shooter's dominant eye and adds a small diopter to enhance their vision. Behind that lens is a mechanical iris that can be adjusted to change the perceived depth of field, allowing shooters to focus more sharply on their target. Finally, a series of blinders blocks out distractions—the non-dominant eye has its blinder, and additional blinders are placed on each side of the shooter's peripheral vision.

For Canadian Olympic shooter Lynda Kiejko, who competed at Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020, vision has always been a crucial part of her success.

“Getting regular eye exams and checking the accuracy of prescriptions is really important,” says Kiejko. “A $\frac{1}{4}$ diopter change makes a world of difference in a shooting-specific application.”

Kiejko's journey to the Olympics began with her family's legacy. Her father, Bill Hare, competed in shooting over three Olympic Games, and her sister, Dorothy Ludwig, represented Canada at London 2012.

Armed for Success

Kiejko's shooting lenses are slightly different from her everyday prescription, fine-tuned specifically for the demands of the sport.

“I use Knobloch shooting glasses,” says Kiejko. “They hold a specially designed lens perfectly level with my eye, and it's adjustable so that I always see through the exact centre of the lens, thus improving vision accuracy.”

Shooting ranges across the world present varied lighting conditions, requiring athletes to adapt. Indoor events are often dimly lit, while outdoor competitions involve dynamic lighting changes as the sun moves across the sky. Kiejko has adapted to these challenges by using coloured filter lenses that either increase or reduce contrast depending on the conditions.

“Conditions at each venue affect how I see the front sight in relation to the target and rear sight,” says Kiejko. “Testing out different lenses during open training or pre-event training provides the opportunity to find the right fit.”

Dr. Curtis Akerman, owner and optometrist at Milton Vision & Sports Vision Training

“Getting regular eye exams and checking the accuracy of prescriptions is really important. A $\frac{1}{4}$ diopter change makes a world of difference in a shooting-specific application.”

Kiejko uses a lens over her dominant shooting eye, while a light-coloured blinder covers her non-dominant eye, allowing her to keep both eyes open.

“Keeping both eyes open during competition is important to reduce eye strain or prevent the depth perception from being impacted by one closed eye,” she says.

Centre, has worked closely with Kiejko and other athletes to ensure their vision is optimized for elite competition. Akerman has worked with many athletes and he understands the unique visual challenges shooters face.

“We always start off by performing a sports vision evaluation to assess strengths and

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deficiencies in visual function and processing," says Akerman. "We then assess the specific visual demands of the sport to determine areas of opportunity for improvement and to ensure that their optical needs are being addressed."

For shooters like Kiejko, visual skills such as fixation stability and saccadic eye movements are as important as having 20/20 vision. Akerman uses a combination of traditional vision therapy techniques and technology-based training to fine-tune athletes' visual systems. He points out that even small visual issues, such as binocular misalignment, can affect performance, especially in shooting where precision is critical.

Akerman recalls working with an Olympic-level skeet shooter who struggled with visual misalignment when tracking targets.

"We worked on directional binocular alignment with him for a few sessions and discussed modifying his stance when shooting from his problem positions to open his face to allow his right eye to track the target earlier," he says.

"Ask questions... ask the athlete to bring in their equipment. It's not just about vision; it's about how they use their eyes in their sport."

After just a few sessions, the athlete saw significant improvements in his performance.

While Kiejko sometimes wears contact lenses in her daily life, she avoids them close to competition due to her astigmatism.

"Even with the newer lenses, I find that I strain my vision more with contacts than with prescription glasses," she says.

Akerman emphasizes that customizing eyewear for shooters goes beyond basic corrections. "Shooting glasses should be ANSI Z87.1+ safety rated to provide proper protection with optimized clarity," says Akerman.

Kiejko's advice to aspiring shooters is clear: make vision a priority.

"Having discussions with your eye care specialist about what you are doing in the sport, and where the focal point is, makes a big difference in getting a correct set of lenses," she says.

Akerman agrees, advising eye care professionals to deeply understand the visual demands of the specific sport their athlete competes in.

"Ask questions about what discipline(s) the shooter is participating in and ask the athlete to bring in their equipment," he says. "It's not just about vision; it's about how they use their eyes in their sport."

In shooting, vision is more than just sight — it's a skill that must be honed and maintained just like any other aspect of performance. For Kiejko, the combination of expert care, specialized eyewear and years of experience helped her see the target clearly and hit the mark when it counted the most.

"Every little adjustment can make a big difference in competition," she says. **OP**



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Chances are, at least one out of every five patients you will see today experiences migraine – the debilitating neurological disorder that affects more than one billion people worldwide.

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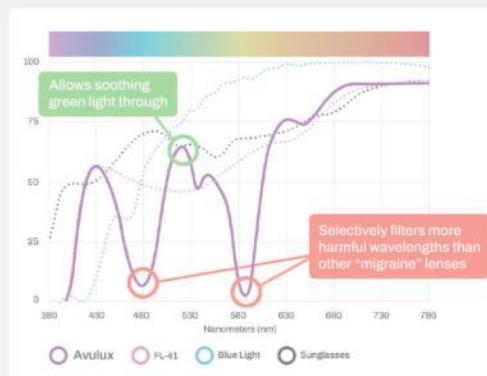
especially sensitive to light – even to the point where it takes them away from doing the things they normally enjoy?

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Eye Safety Scare

Don't overlook eye safety - Sensible steps prevent scary consequences

BY DR. MARTIN SPIRO, CAO PRESIDENT

We are all familiar with the assertion that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and when it comes to eye safety, this couldn't be truer. It is easy to lose sight of this principle when kids are late for basketball practice or when they see some spooky costume contact lenses in a drug store. However, eye doctors can attest to the serious consequences that can arise when eye safety is overlooked. Ocular injuries while playing sports are one of the leading causes of non-congenital vision loss in children. We want to support and encourage participation in sports and recreational activities, and putting safety first helps ensure the fun of the activity isn't cut short by an accident.

Getting kids into the habit of wearing proper eye protection when participating in sports and hobbies helps instill the practice and parents can model it by using eye protection regularly themselves. As Eye Care Professionals, we mustn't limit our patient conversations to just vision correction and pathology. Educate patients about safeguarding their eye health so they can stay in the game for years to come.

Appropriate eyewear, like safety glasses and goggles, can help prevent most sports-related eye injuries, with the keyword being appropriate. For some sports or activities, standard eyeglasses or sunglasses may not provide sufficient protection and can even result in more damage to the eye if the lenses shatter.



Safety glasses and goggles aren't one-size-fits-all. Eyewear must have the qualities needed to protect from the specific risks of the task or activity it is being used for. Talk to patients and parents about the sports and activities they participate in so you can suggest the most effective eye protection for them.

As Halloween approaches kids (and adults) are planning their costumes. Cosmetic contact lenses have become increasingly popular, but they come with their own set of risks.

As Halloween approaches kids (and adults) are planning their costumes. We can highlight eye safety considerations to help ensure a safe and fun outing. Cosmetic contact lenses have become increasingly popular, but they come with their own set of risks. Remind patients that cosmetic lenses can cause harm if improperly fit, used, cleaned, or cared for.

Lenses should only be purchased from an authorized dispenser. A prescription and proper instructions will help to minimize the risks. Sourcing lenses from eye care providers also ensures that the lenses are sourced from an approved manufacturer. Because cosmetic lenses are non-corrective, people may be tempted to share them, so remind your patients that this is an absolute no-no and a huge infection risk. Those who don't usually wear contact lenses must also be educated on proper wear, care and cleaning.

Lenses aren't the only concern when it comes to costumes. Makeup can offer a dramatic effect, but it must be used safely. When using face paints or makeup, it is important to use products specifically designed for the face and avoid applying anything near the eyes that isn't labelled as safe for that purpose.

One of my top Halloween safety tips is—to see and be seen! Before heading out of the house, it is important that parents check that kids' face masks do not obstruct vision. Reflective tape and stickers on costumes and loot bags will help increase visibility and avoid accidents. Flashlights or wearable LEDs are great accessories to assist with this.

Clear vision is invaluable. Emphasize to patients that proper eye protection is a small but significant investment that is so important to ensure healthy eyes and clear vision so kids can continue to work and play, free from injury and impairment. **OP**

Dr. Martin Spiro is president of the Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO). The CAO is the national voice of optometry, providing leadership and support to more than 8,300 members (optometrists, students and optometric assistants) to enhance the delivery of healthy eyes and clear vision for all Canadians.



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1. Lam CS, Tang WC, Lee PH, et al. Myopia control effect of defocus incorporated multiple segments (DIMS) spectacle lens in Chinese children: results of a 3-year follow-up study. British Journal of Ophthalmology Published Online First: 17 March 2021. doi:10.1136/bjophthalmol-2020-317664

Weight Loss, Vision Loss

Keeping a watchful eye on Ozempic

BY EVRA TAYLOR

If you're struggling with your weight, should you also have to worry about eye health risks? When Ozempic (semaglutide), a GLP-1 receptor agonist, received Health Canada approval in 2018, it was heralded as the proverbial 'next best thing since sliced bread'—not only for its effectiveness in lowering HbA1c in Type 2 diabetes but also for its off-label use in weight loss. In the U.S., other medications used for weight loss are Wegovy, Mounjaro and Zepbound.

While Ozempic is effective in reducing the risk of major cardiovascular events such as stroke, heart attack or death in adults, a recent major clinical trial has demonstrated its potential link to nonarteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy (NAION), a condition that typically appears in one eye at a time and can lead to vision loss. Diabetes is a known risk factor for NAION, the most common cause of optic neuropathy in Caucasian adults over age 50.



A December 2023 survey from Dalhousie University cited that between 900,000 and 1.4 million Canadians are currently using a GLP-1 drug. The survey had a total of 8,662 respondents, with a margin of error of 1.84 percent.

According to a 36-month study conducted at Harvard University, published on July 3, 2024, in *JAMA Ophthalmology*,¹ there was a higher risk of NAION in patients prescribed semaglutide compared with those prescribed a non-glucagon-like peptide receptor. NAION, sometimes described as “a stroke of the optic nerve,” often occurs upon awakening from sleep. Although the condition is rare, it is a major cause of blindness in the U.S.

The study authors stated, “Our anecdotal clinical experience motivated us to study whether semaglutide is associated with an increased risk of developing NAION”. More than 16,800 patients with Type 2 diabetes who were either overweight or obese were enrolled. The findings concluded that patients on semaglutide had a higher risk of NAION than their counterparts on non-GLP-1 agonists, noting that “the pathogenesis of NAION has not been fully elucidated”. After taking patients’ other risk factors for the condition into account, such as high blood pressure and obstructive sleep apnea, patients with type 2 diabetes were more than four times as likely to have a diagnosis of NAION; patients with obesity were more than eight times as likely. The greatest risk of NAION was within the first year of semaglutide use, a temporal association that supports a potential drug-induced risk of NAION. While numerous studies on Ozempic have been conducted worldwide, this is the first one to identify an association with NAION.

Awareness of semaglutide’s heightened risk for NAION isn’t new. Earlier clinical trials have reported blurred vision and early worsening of diabetic retinopathy and macular complications, but these have been considered temporary side effects that resolve after three or four months.

Clinical trials in any therapeutic sector are often characterized by nuance, partly due to trial design. While the results of the Harvard study revealed a link between

While Ozempic is effective in reducing the risk of major CV events such as stroke, heart attack or death in adults, a recent major clinical trial has demonstrated its potential link to nonarteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy (NAION).

semaglutide and NAION, this does not equate to causality. As an observational study, it wasn’t designed to show that. Establishing cause and effect would require a much larger, retrospective, multicentre population-based cohort study; a prospective, randomized clinical study; or a post-market analysis of all GLP-1 RA drugs.

According to an article published on August 6, 2024, in *Stroke Journal*, the study’s conclusions were immediately relayed by influential U.S. media outlets such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the Guardian, USA Today and Forbes, as well as news agencies such as Reuters. Five days after the article was released, the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) and the North American Neuro-Ophthalmology Society (NANOS) issued a joint press release, calling for caution in the interpretation of its results and stating that “this intriguing finding [suggesting a potential link between semaglutide treatment and NAION] should inspire more research that will help clarify if semaglutide does cause NAION”.

What does this mean for patients?

The press release contained these statements and recommendations for patients:

At this time, we do not recommend that people stop taking semaglutide.

If you take semaglutide and have a sudden loss of vision, stop taking the drug and see a doctor immediately.

Is semaglutide safe for people who previously had NAION? The study offers no information about people who previously had NAION and then developed it again following a prescription for semaglutide.

Should people also be concerned about other diabetes drugs, such as tirzepatide (Zepbound or Mounjaro)? Semaglutide is the only drug investigated in this study.

Patients should talk with their primary care physician to determine if semaglutide is right for them.

Additionally, the press release described vision changes linked to semaglutide:

How can semaglutide cause temporary vision changes? When the body experiences a change in sugar level, it can affect the shape of the eye’s lens. This change is what causes blurry vision.

Could a similar phenomenon be at play in this study? Could the ability of semaglutide to rapidly reduce glucose levels and blood pressure cause NAION and not the drug itself? This is unknown. Only further research can answer that question.

An article by Dr. Vered Hazanchuk posted on the AAO website states: “Experts say there isn’t enough data yet to suggest patients should be concerned or should stop taking their medications. People who have

diabetes are already at risk for NAION, whether they use semaglutide or not."

"Older patients are more likely to experience blurred vision when beginning the medication," said retina specialist Raj Maturi, MD. This is because the eye's lens becomes less flexible as we age, so vision takes longer to stabilize when the body experiences these changes in blood sugar levels. The good news is that this is a temporary side effect, usually subsiding after three or four months," said Dr. Maturi.

Conclusions and future research

"Patients should be aware of this information and, in consultation with their care team, make a careful, informed choice based on their individual risk profile," said neuro-ophthalmologist Andrew Lee.

A December 2023 survey from Dalhousie University cited that between **900,000 and 1.4 million Canadians are currently using a GLP-1 drug.**

Dr. Joseph Rizzo, director of the Neuro-Ophthalmology Service at Mass Eye and Ear in Boston, MA, and lead author of the study, concluded: "Our findings should be viewed as being significant but tentative, as future studies are needed to examine these questions in a much larger and more diverse population".

"The use of these drugs has exploded throughout industrialized countries and has provided very significant benefits in many ways, but future discussions between a patient and their physician should include NAION as a potential risk," said Rizzo, the study's corresponding author. "It is important to appreciate, however, that the

increased risk relates to a disorder that is relatively uncommon."

In a statement, manufacturer Novo Nordisk noted several limitations of the study design. "Overall, the data published in the study is not sufficient to establish a causal association between GLP-1 receptor agonist use and NAION," the Danish drugmaker said, adding that the condition "is not an adverse drug reaction for the marketed formulations of semaglutide". **OP**

REFERENCE:
Hathaway JT, Shah MP, Hathaway DB, et al. Risk of nonarteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy in patients prescribed semaglutide. *JAMA Ophthalmology*. 2024;142(8):732-739.

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Visionary Success

Inside Dr. Michael Luu's thriving clinic at White Oaks Mall, London, Ontario.

Since opening his independent clinic and Specsavers location at White Oaks Mall in London, Ontario, Dr. Michael Luu and his team have conducted more than 7,000 eye exams, focusing on making eye care affordable to patients and customers. As the team celebrates its first year and a half of business, Dr. Luu takes a look back on his journey so far, and shares what his patients and customers are saying.

Q: What has inspired your career within the optical industry?

I've always been fascinated by our sense of vision and the important role it plays in the way we learn, interact and perceive the world around us. Coupled with a passion to help others, I decided to pursue a career in optometry. Following years of studies, I graduated from the University of Waterloo School of Optometry in 2009 and spent the first nine years of my career practising in Toronto. In 2018, my family and I made the move to the beautiful city of London.

Q: How did you know when was the right time to start your own business?

It had always been a longstanding goal of mine to open my own clinic, but the start-up costs, financial risks and uncertainties that come with opening a business made me pass up on several opportunities.

So when Specsavers arrived in Canada,

it was an opportunity like no other. Their partnership model was already a proven success around the world, and the support team offered indispensable help every step of the way – from the initial start-up to everyday business support. Having a retail partner to manage the optical side also meant that I could focus more of my attention on the clinic and providing the care my patients need. I knew it was the right time to pursue my goal of business ownership.

Q: How has business been since opening the doors to Specsavers White Oaks Mall?

I am so pleased to say that we have already provided more than 4,500 comprehensive eye exams in our first year. Thanks to the dedication of our team, we have achieved our eye exam goals and have set record weeks recently. We have such a great team who have made it all possible and I'm extremely proud of what our teamwork has accomplished so far.



“With OCT imaging included, my patients no longer have to choose whether it is within their budget.”

— DR. MICHAEL LUU, Optometry Partner

Q: How has including OCT changed the way you can care for your patients?

As an optometry partner, I'm proud to be able to provide affordable eye care for all patients. With OCT imaging included in eye exams, my patients no longer have to choose whether this important diagnostic imaging is within their budget.

Q: What are you hearing from patients and customers?

I've had many thankful patients who were pleasantly surprised that OCT was included in their eye exam when they used to pay for it elsewhere. It gives me a great sense of fulfillment every day to be able to provide quality, accessible eye care and to see so many grateful patients. **OP**



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Time Out

The Importance of Encouraging Breaks from Screen Time Focus on VR and Computers in the Workplace

BY ROBERT DALTON, OAC



As opticians, it's crucial to communicate the importance of regular screen breaks, especially with the increasing use of digital devices in the workplace. With the growing integration of computers and VR systems, maintaining a balanced approach to screen use has never been more essential.

THE DIGITAL WORKPLACE: VR AND COMPUTERS

The workplace has been transformed by technology. Computers are now essential for everything from data entry to complex simulations. VR is also gaining traction as a tool for training, design, and remote collaboration. However, both require prolonged screen exposure, which can lead to physical and mental health issues.

PHYSICAL HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Eye Strain and Fatigue: Extended screen time can result in eye strain and fatigue, commonly referred to as computer vision syndrome (CVS). Symptoms include dry eyes, blurred vision, and headaches. VR

headsets can exacerbate these symptoms due to their proximity to the eyes, leading to discomfort and reduced productivity.

Vision Health: Prolonged exposure to screens can contribute to long-term vision issues. Blue light from screens can disrupt sleep patterns and may cause retinal damage. While proper lighting, screen filters, and adjusting screen brightness can mitigate these risks, regular breaks remain essential to preserving eye health.

MENTAL HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

Cognitive Fatigue: Continuous screen exposure requires high levels of cognitive engagement, which can lead to mental exhaustion. This is particularly true in VR environments, where the immersive nature heightens cognitive load, impairing decision-making and creativity over time.

Stress and Burnout: Constant digital connectivity can blur the lines between work and personal life, contributing to stress and burnout. The pressure to stay responsive and productive makes it challenging for employees to fully disconnect.

THE BENEFITS OF TAKING BREAKS

Enhanced Productivity: Regular, short breaks can significantly boost productivity. Stepping away from screens allows the brain to rest and recharge, improving focus and efficiency. Techniques like the Pomodoro Technique, where 25 minutes of work is followed by a 5-minute break, are particularly effective.

Improved Vision Health: Breaks that involve focusing on distant objects or practicing eye exercises help reduce strain from prolonged screen use, promoting long-term vision health.

Better Mental Health: Mental breaks help alleviate cognitive fatigue and reduce stress. Engaging in non-screen activities, such as reading, meditating, or spending time outdoors, improves mood and creates a healthier work environment.

IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE BREAK STRATEGIES

Scheduled Breaks: Encourage clients to schedule breaks throughout the workday. Apps or reminders can help them develop the habit of stepping away from screens.

Eye Care Practices: Promote the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds to reduce eye strain.

Physical Activity: Encourage incorporating physical activity during breaks, such as walking, stretching, or quick exercises.

Screen-Free Zones: Suggest creating screen-free zones where employees can relax without digital distractions.

CONCLUSION

As technology reshapes the workplace, emphasizing the importance of regular screen breaks is crucial to maintaining physical and mental health, improving productivity, and preventing burnout. By promoting effective strategies, we can help clients achieve a healthier, more balanced work environment. **OP**

Robert Dalton is the executive director of the Opticians Association of Canada, whose mission is to promote licensed opticians and the profession, maintain professional standards, and educate and inform consumers about eye health. For more information, visit opticians.ca.

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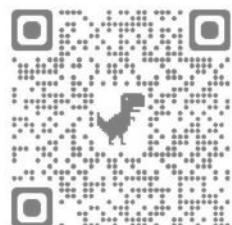
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The Perfect Pick-up

Bringing it all together at the Eyewear Pick-up

BY NANCY DEWALD



Imagine, you just spent \$1000 on a custom suit or your very first suit.

You are excited to pick it up when you arrive, they aren't as excited as you are about your purchase. They bring it out from the back in a clear plastic crumpled garment bag.

Double-check the name to ensure they have the right person and tell you if you have trouble to let them know. You ask yourself what kind of trouble could I have, this is custom they took all the measurements. You leave and your excitement is squashed and replaced with buyer's remorse.

By now you realize I am drawing a comparison to our patients picking up their new eyewear. You might be telling yourself that kind of experience doesn't happen at our location, maybe not the whole scenario but perhaps elements of it do.

Creating a memorable last impression is key, and reviewing this process several times a year is a smart idea.

Elements for success:

Presentation – present the product and case in a nice clean display tray.

- be sure glasses are clean.
- Use their name, we like to hear the sound of our own name and it makes the experience more personal.

Fit eyewear – consider leaving the markings on, this is a terrific opportunity to reassure the patient the eyewear was made exactly how they were ordered. This helps patients understand the importance of measurements and reinforces that their eyewear was custom-made.

Check vision – this is the whole objective, yet we often skip this step. Review lens choice and set expecta-

tions based on changes such as power, lens type and frame selection. Help the patient experience crisper sharper vision with resources such as reading cards, illustrations for task lenses, polarized demos etc.

Adjust eyewear – when asked why people were not happy with their eyewear, the overwhelming answer was "it was uncomfortable." If the eyewear is not comfortable, it ends up in a drawer. Friends and family hear about the frustration and we know that we lose that business going forward. Comfort in eyewear is something within our control, we must ensure staff is trained and we take the time to get this right.

Compliment – choosing eyewear is a big decision and can be stressful, reassure the patient that they have made a good choice. Compliments always need to be authentic, to be authentic make compliments specific. For example, that blue makes your eye pop versus good choice in color.

Say thank you – your patients have trusted you with their vision which is the sense we rely on the most, so thank them. They have choices, they chose your business.

Regular tune-ups – let them know the interaction does not end here, encourage them to visit to ensure their eyewear is always fitting properly or reach out if they have questions. At this point do not review all the things that could potentially go wrong.

Review proper cleaning and provide a cloth and/or cleaner. (Preferably with branding on it).

Creating a memorable impression when your patients pick up their eyewear will influence patient loyalty which as we know is key to the success of any business.

When we know better, we do better.
OP

Nancy Dewald is a business development professional, workshop facilitator and optical industry veteran. She is CEO and founder of Lead Up Training and Consulting, which specializes in identifying business gaps, implementing solutions and developing leaders. To find out more, visit leaduptrainingandconsulting.ca.

Reality Check

The Impact of Augmented Reality on Eyewear Shopping

BY HEATHER HOBMA, MARKETING4ECPS

Augmented reality (AR) has been around for years and applied in many different settings, from museums to advertising. However, the technology has only recently become sophisticated and affordable enough for widespread adoption in the retail sector, particularly for virtual try-on (VTO) experiences.

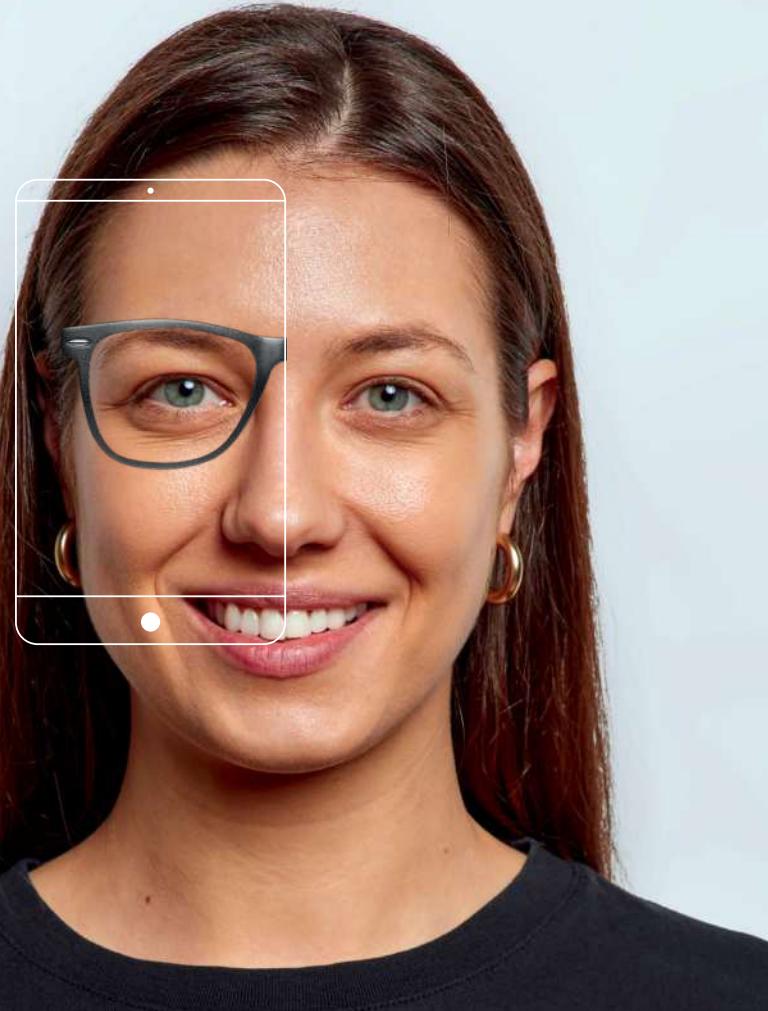
Early attempts at VTO were a far cry from today's user-friendly solutions. They often employed clunky methods or glitchy graphics that negatively impacted the user experience. The past decade has seen significant advancements in AR technology.

Smartphone cameras are now powerful enough to map facial features accurately, and cloud-based processing allows for real-time rendering of 3D models. These advancements have paved the way for more user-friendly AR applications in the eyewear industry.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF AUGMENTED REALITY

AR overlays digital elements or information on the real world, primarily using a smartphone or tablet, to create an interactive and immersive user experience.

One of the earliest commercial applications was in 2008 when a German advertising agency used an AR-enabled print ad to bring



the BMW Mini into reality—or at least to a computer screen. Users with a computer camera could view the car on their screen, manipulating the magazine to explore different angles.

As early as 2013, 20/20 Magazine was heralding virtual try-ons (or VTOs) as “the greatest tool ever to enhance the process of selecting and selling eyewear,” held back not by technology but by adoption by eye care professionals.

In 2015, Apple offered consumers the opportunity to try on different models of the Apple Watch virtually, but it was a multi-step process: they needed to print a PDF cutout, physically attach it to their wrist, download an app to scan a QR code and launch the AR Watch experience.

Then, in 2016, the smartphone game PokéMon Go was launched. With over 232 million players during its first year, this game rocketed AR into the mainstream and demonstrated its potential to captivate consumers' imaginations. Although its user base has declined since then, it remains hugely popular.

This isn't to say that AR has been flawless—many attempts are seen as gimmicks, failing to provide a meaningful or valuable experience for users. However, retail companies have continued to invest in AR, recognizing its potential for enhancing the customer experience and increasing sales.

SHIFTING THE FOCUS FROM GIMMICK TO UTILITY

Traditionally, selecting glasses focused primarily on fulfilling prescription needs at physical stores. Online shopping offered convenience, but it lacked a personalized shopping experience.

VTO empowers consumers to virtually try on frames from anywhere, transforming eyewear from a medical need to a fashion statement. This shift—from need to want—gives consumers more agency and control over their choices.

It works, too. Studies show that VTO increases sales and conversion rates, and reduces returns. For consumers, VTO offers a convenient way to try on frames. For businesses, it translates to happier customers, increased sales, and improved operational efficiency.

VTO adoption was already on the rise, but the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of virtual shopping across

retail sectors. With physical stores closed or operating with limited capacity, consumers turned to online options. VTO was a game-changer for the eyewear industry during this time. It allowed people to safely and conveniently shop for glasses without visiting in person, addressing public health concerns and ensuring continuity in eyewear purchases during a period of disruption.

THE FUTURE OF VTO IS BRIGHT

Now that COVID-19 is (largely) behind us, some companies are using AR to encourage customers to visit brick-and-mortar stores.

In 2023, Sunglass Hut partnered with Ready Player Me to allow customers to redeem virtual Ray-Ban and Oakley glasses for their Metaverse avatars by scanning a QR code in select stores. By linking virtual merchandise to physical sites, they engaged customers in a new and exciting way that encouraged in-store foot traffic.

Some practices have invested in smart mirrors, which use AR to display virtual frames directly on a user's reflection. Smart mirrors encourage consumers to visit in person while enjoying the novelty of an enhanced shopping experience. Imagine standing in front of a smart mirror and seeing how different styles look on you in real time without physically trying on each pair.

The future of VTO technology continues to be bright, with ongoing advancements promising even more immersive, creative, and interactive experiences. By building on the foundation of VTO's early days and embracing future possibilities, AR is poised to revolutionize how we shop for eyewear online. **OP**

Heather Hobma is a senior editor at Marketing4ECPS with over ten years of experience in writing and editing. She has a marketing and museum studies background and a passion for the Oxford comma. She wrote her graduate thesis on using augmented reality to explore cultural heritage sites. In her spare time, Heather goes on adventures with her young son, husband, and dog. Heather can be reached at marketing4ecps.com.



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- Elevate your team from “order-takers” to “eyewear stylists”
- Lead the sales conversation to increase capture rate

“Within weeks of this sales training, my team more than tripled our multi-pair sales, with some patients buying 3 pairs.”

- DR. LYNDSEY KAY, Waterdown Optometric

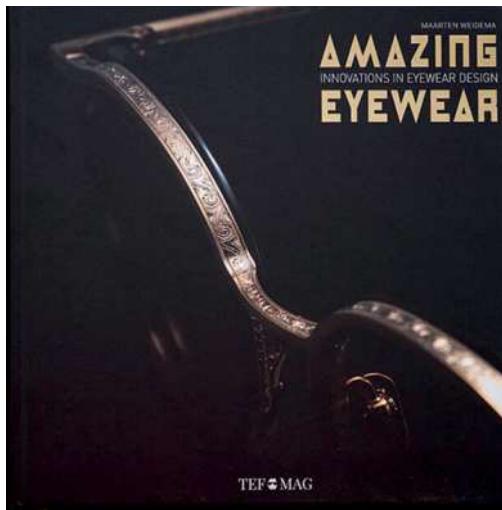
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Eye-Catching Products

A selection of stylish, unique, and innovative eyewear products that have caught our eye this month.



CRYSTAL EYE RING

This adjustable crystal eye ring is a captivating fusion of mystique and elegance, that brings a touch of intrigue to your jewellery collection!

Whether worn alone as a statement piece or stacked with other rings for a more eclectic look, this is a versatile accessory that transcends seasons.

butlerandwilson.co.uk



Blue Magic Mirror
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Trusted by Olympians, our custom-made goggles provide a perfect fit for your unique facial structure. Say goodbye to water leakage and suction marks with our no-leak, mirrored lenses and custom-fit nose bridge. Enjoy complete comfort and performance with goggles tailored to your needs.

themagic5.com

FITEYEZ™ GUMMIES

FitEyez™ gummies offer a complete eye health solution for all ages, packed with essential nutrients. Ideal for children (5+), adults, and seniors, these delicious gummies benefit everyone, especially athletes and sports enthusiasts seeking a competitive edge through better vision.

fiteyez.com



TRIHARD PRE & POST SWIM EYE GEL

Say goodbye to irritation, redness, and "goggle eyes" after swimming.

Trihard's versatile Pre and Post Swim Eye Gel cools, soothes, and refreshes with chamomile and natural oils like jojoba and olive. Apply before and after swimming to reduce dryness, inflammation, and those unwanted red marks without affecting your goggle seal.

thefeed.com



LIBRA



SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 22

Astrological signs say a lot about someone's personality – which in turn is reflected in their sense of style. Here's the "eyewear horoscope" for this month's zodiac sign.

Libra, ruled by the planet Venus, is the epitome of charm and sophistication, blending grace with a deep sense of justice. This air sign is characterized by its diplomatic nature and a constant pursuit of harmony in both personal relationships and its environment. Libras are renowned for their refined taste and their appreciation for beauty, which is often reflected in their stylish wardrobe choices. They are naturally drawn to soft, harmonious colors like pastel pinks, serene blues, and earthy tones that complement their tranquil and balanced demeanor. Their sense of fashion leans towards elegance and timelessness, favoring classic silhouettes with contemporary twists. Libras have a remarkable ability to mix high fashion with subtle accessories, striking a perfect balance between sophistication and a playful touch. This effortless grace and equilibrium make them innate trendsetters with a keen eye for harmonious design. Famous Libras such as Gandhi, Kim Kardashian, and Hugh Jackman exemplify the sign's blend of charm, creativity, and a strong sense of justice, illustrating how Libra's elegance is intertwined with their pursuit of balance. **OP**



Cruz by Tree Spectacle



Minion by Woodys



Mix-match by Lafont



Moyel by Moscot



Dixon by LeParc

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Urban Optics - College Station, TX



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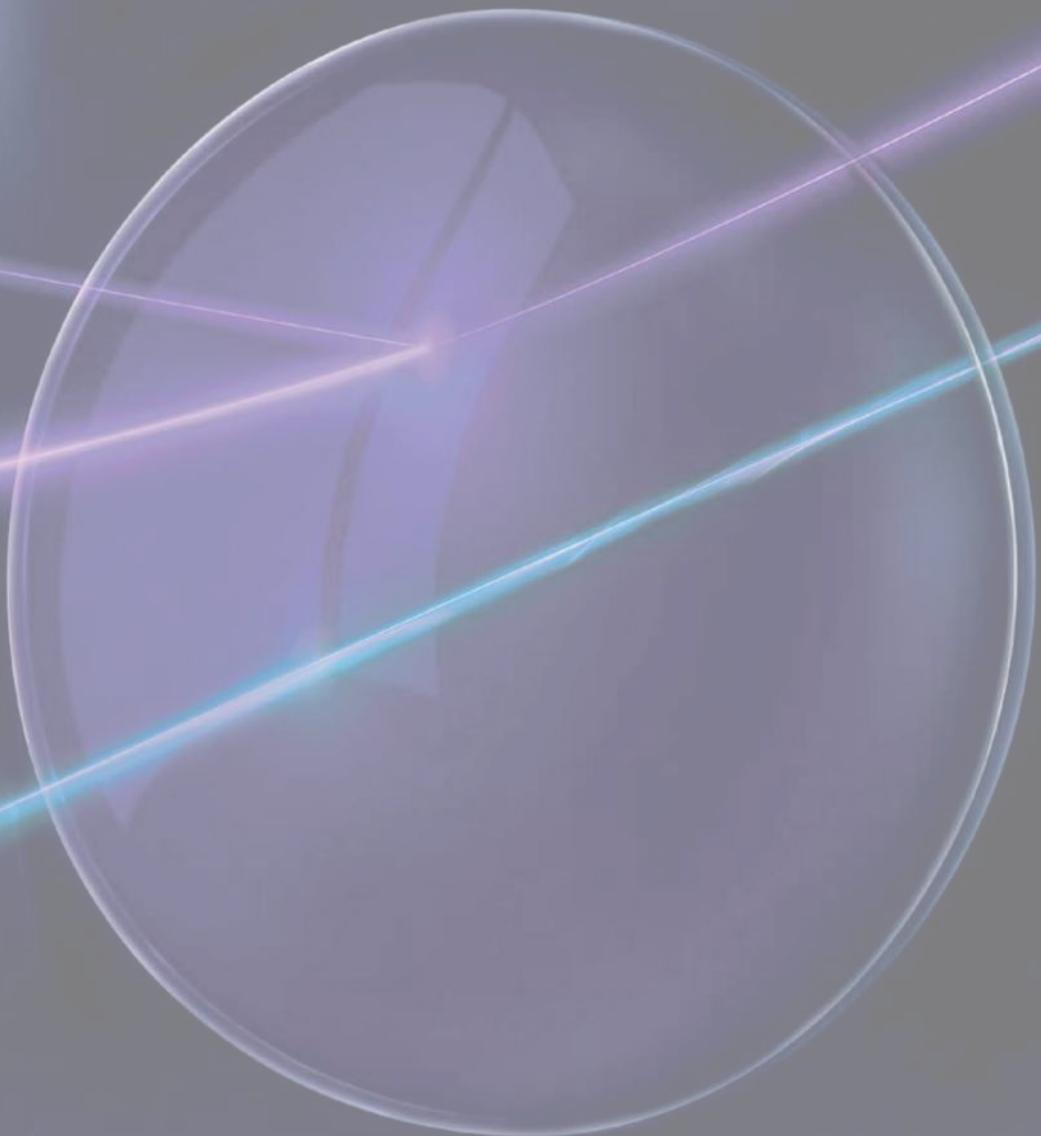
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