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Polarized Sunglasses: What Are They and Are They Better for You?

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If you're looking for a new pair of stylish sunglasses to add to your wardrobe as we transition from the last few weeks of summer into the first little bit of autumn, you've probably come across the term 'polarized', and you may be wondering what exactly polarized sunglasses are and why they come with a higher price-tag. Polarized sunglasses are made with special lenses that undergo a more complicated manufacturing process than their non-polarized counterparts. These polarized lenses make for higher-quality sunglasses and are therefore a popular choice among consumers and designers alike.

You can find polarized sunglasses made by just about every sunglasses manufacturer there is, and it should be easy to find a design of sunglasses you like that includes polarized lenses. Even if you don't have 20-20 vision, you can get prescription sunglasses that are still polarized. Here's everything you need to know about polarized sunglasses.

How Polarization Works

The first thing to understand about polarized sunglasses is how the lenses are actually made. The lenses used in polarized sunglasses are actually coated in a chemical film that is designed to reduce glare. Glare is caused by fragmented sunlight bouncing off of water, or other solid surfaces. These sharp reflections are harsh on the eyes and can make it difficult to see clearly. By reducing glare, then, we improve vision-clarity, relax eye-strain, and make it easier to both see and appreciate the world around us.

The way this chemical film actually reduces glare is pretty cool, too. Non-polarized lenses reduce the amount of light flowing through the lens both vertically and horizontally. These crossing lightwaves are a part of why glare is so harsh. In a pair of polarized lenses, though, horizontal light waves are fully absorbed, meaning that light is only flowing through the lens vertically and one-directionally.

This drastically reduces glare and makes it much easier to see.

It's also important to note that there are different levels of polarization that manufacturers can achieve. .75mm and 1.1mm polarized lenses are the two most standard sizes when it comes to polarization. .75mm lenses are a good option for the everyday person and are just as effective at reducing glare and protecting the eyes from harsh and harmful UV rays. 1.1mm lenses, on the

other hand, are a bit more durable, and can last a much longer time if properly cared for.

Regardless of which size of polarized lens you opt for, neither are drastically better at reducing glare. The main differences between .75mm lenses and 1.1mm polarized lenses is the impact resistance and the price tag. Being made from thicker sheets of film, the 1.1mm polarized lenses are naturally a bit more pricey than the .75mm options. How much money you're comfortable spending on your new pair of sunglasses can help you decide which thickness of polarization will be right for you.

Why Polarized Lenses are Beneficial

As mentioned above, one of the biggest benefits that polarized sunglasses offer is reduced glare. This is incredibly helpful in a wide array of situations and contexts. From hiking, to fishing, to driving, to golfing, to sitting on a hammock reading a book in a bikini, reducing the amount of glare in your life can be a game-changer. Your eyes will say thank you.

Not only that, but there are certain sports and recreational activities in which polarized sunglasses can actually help improve performance. Fishing, boating, golfing, baseball, and other similar outdoor activities can be a lot smoother if you're wearing polarized sunglasses.

Besides reducing glare and improving performance in certain contexts, polarized sunglasses also help protect the human eye from harsh UV rays that the sun casts. This is important for eye-health and vision longevity.

Specific Use Cases for Polarized Lenses

As mentioned a little bit earlier on, there are plenty of specific use-cases for polarized sunglasses. Fishing, boating, and other outdoor water sports are notoriously improved experiences while wearing polarized sunglasses. This is because they help reduce the glare from the sun off the water, and allow for the wearer to see things beneath the surface more clearly.

In recent years, other sports have gravitated toward the use of polarized lenses too, like in beach volleyball, golf, baseball, football, and plenty of others.

Checking to see if Sunglasses are Polarized

There are a few easy ways to check and see if your current pair of sunglasses is already polarized or not. For instance, taking your pair of sunglasses in question and placing it up against the computer screen – then rotating the lenses to about 60 degrees. If the lenses are polarized, the screen should dim or blacken as the glasses reach about 60 degrees.

The easiest way to see if your sunglasses are polarized, though, is to check the label. And, if you're unsure, you may as well use this as an excuse to go buy that new pair of shades you've wanted for sometime now anyway.

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