

# Out of Sight, Out of Mind

By Lane Osborne

I suffer from myopia, what most of us call nearsightedness. In fact, without contacts or glasses I can't see something clearly unless it's twelve inches from my face.

As timing would have it, I have an eye appointment tomorrow morning at 8 a.m. They will likely go through the common battery of tests. They usually begin with a corneal and retinal topography to record the curvature of the cornea to determine any ocular swelling, scarring, check for astigmatism, and to make sure that the contacts I get after the appointment are the best fit.

Next is a visual field test to measure peripheral vision. I will stare at a dot in the center of the screen and simply press a button every time I notice a squiggly image appear in my side vision.

After that I'm typically led into the actual exam room where they will squirt numbing drops in my eyes and proceed to bounce a tonometer off my eyeballs to measure the amount of pressure needed to flatten my corneas. This test is to make sure I don't have glaucoma.

The pupillary dilation test is next in which they place more drops in my eyes, but these drops (no surprise here) dilate my pupils. This enables the optometrist to get a good look at the retinas to make sure they look healthy. He customarily performs a slit lamp exam at this point where he shines an extremely bright light into my fully dilated eyes to check for cataracts, macular degeneration, and the like.

A cover test is done at some point in which each eye is merely covered and then uncovered to evaluate how the eye fixates once again on the object of focus.

Finally, he does the standard refraction test where he will have me look at a chart in a mirror while looking through a phoropter. This, as we are likely all familiar, is the point when the optometrist turns dials and knobs and asks "Better like this? Or better like this?" At that point the exam is over and I'll be on my way. Seeing is a beautiful thing.

I'm neither long enough off the tee, nor a sufferer of cataracts, so I can't hit the ball out of sight. However, there are times that I wonder if it wouldn't be better if I suffered from hyperopia (farsightedness) instead...so I just couldn't see my scorecard.

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