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Your local independent opticians

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(/contact-lens-ordering.php)

(feedback.php)

About Us	Eye Care	Hearing	Our Fees	Rawlings Vision	Glasses	Sunglasses	Contact	Sports
(about.php)	(eye-	(bloom-	(professional-	Plans (rawlings-	(glasses.php)	(sunglasses.php)	Lenses	Vision
	care.php)	hearing.php)	fees.php)	vision-plan.php)			(contact-	(sports-
							lenses.php)	vision.php)

NEWSLETTER – SUMMER 2020

What has changed at Rawlings since Lockdown?

We are open for business ‘almost as usual’ – but what does this mean? For our patients initially it simply means that you will see us wearing the necessary PPE and with screens in place for both your and our safety.

Although we ask you to wear a face covering you will be able to try on glasses as usual and you will be able to remove your face covering for this! Of course all frames tried on are disinfected before being returned to our shelves, along with the many other disinfection procedures in place throughout each branch.

Due to social distancing our staff numbers are reduced which necessitates prior booking for things you used to just ‘pop in’ for , for example collecting new glasses or choosing new frames. We aim to answer the phone as quickly as possible but occasionally you may need to leave us a message or drop us an email if you don’t get through first time and we really appreciate your patience with this. We can only allow a limited number of people in at once so again we appreciate your patience if you have to wait outside for a few minutes.

Your eye examination will be as normal as possible although in order to limit face to face time in such an enclosed space you may find your friendly Rawlings Optometrist is not as chatty as usual – a challenge for some of us! In addition, a streamlined ‘need-led’ process will be used to concentrate on any specific difficulties you are having, so you may notice the flow of your appointment with the Optometrist has changed a little.

PPE presents many difficulties in the consulting room not the least of which is steaming up of glasses, trial lenses and other equipment but we have various strategies in place such as electric blankets under lenses, hot water bottles to heat equipment, fans to blast away steam and micropore tape to secure wandering face coverings! Despite these challenges even though you cannot see us smiling under our masks – we are!

After each appointment the Optometrist thoroughly cleans and disinfects any items touched including all the trial lenses light switches, surfaces, equipment and so on such that even our vulnerable patients can be sure they are coming to an environment that is as safe as possible. We follow the NHS guidelines regarding PPE changes after every patient so you can be reassured that you are being well looked after and can be confident in coming to see us during this time. However we understand there will be some patients for whom leaving the safety of their home is still too worrying and in this case, please call us for advice if you are experiencing any eye problems.



Working from home?

Many of our patients have found themselves continuing to work from home and in almost all cases this has led to an increase in time spent in front of a computer screen.

More screen time can lead to problems ranging from sore or tired eyes to neck or back ache and there are some very simple steps you can take to help yourself. For further information about healthy eye habits for working from home you can [read our recent blog](https://rawlingsopticians.co.uk/blog-working-from-home-2020.php) (https://rawlingsopticians.co.uk/blog-working-from-home-2020.php) which covers this topic in detail.

Do you have the best glasses for screen use? For the over 40 age group there are specifically designed lenses for this purpose, and these have various names such as office lenses, enhanced readers or smart readers. These are not varifocals (which only have a small area for screen viewing) but are lenses designed to give a big clear area for screen use to minimise fatigue and allow good posture to keep your back and neck in a healthy position. These lenses allow the best depth of focus; however an alternative is a fixed focus computer pair of glasses. Call us to make an appointment to discuss your needs so that we can advise you on the best lenses for your home working environment.



For younger home workers, it is important to know that small prescriptions can make a big difference. This is because looking at a screen is visually intense. So you may have a low prescription that will help you with prolonged screen use which might not be used for anything else. Correcting a small prescription with glasses for computer use can reduce eye strain and headaches.

You may have been told previously about the 20/20/20/20 rule. Regular breaks are vital – every 20 minutes take a 20 second break, look 20 feet away to relax the eye muscles and blink 20 times. This is important because blink rate reduces dramatically when looking at a screen, which affects the delicate tear film protecting the surface of the eyes. Once the tear film chemistry alters this can cause a cascade of issues from dry or watery eyes to eyelid cysts. You may like to keep a bottle of good quality preservative free artificial tears on your desk and pop a drop in every few hours to keep your eyes feeling fresh.

Outdoor life

Social distancing advice has made those of us not tied to a computer working from home spending more time outdoors than ever!

We all take great care of our skin in the sun but we also need to remember how important it is to protect your eyes from the harmful effects of UV. Studies have shown that it may be even more important to protect your eyes from UV radiation in more northerly latitudes such as ours, than when holidaying in hotter climates where the sun is higher in the sky for longer in the day. When the sun is low in the sky there is no natural protection afforded by your brow and so it is more important to wear UV protection. So if you are having a staycation rather than a vacation this summer – don't forget your sunnies!

All our sunglasses are fully UV absorbing and comply with the stringent EU quality standards for protection. So come and choose a stylish pair of designer sunglasses, performance enhancing sports sunglasses or a simple pair for your holiday and enjoy the confidence of our sunglasses price promise.

We can even provide plain and prescription sunglasses with polarised lenses, the ultimate in glare reducing technology and available in a choice of colours. You can read our [blog](https://rawlingsopticians.co.uk/blog.php) (<https://rawlingsopticians.co.uk/blog.php>) about one of our favourite sunglasses brands, [Maui Jim here](https://rawlingsopticians.co.uk/blog-maui-jim-2019-18-07.php) (<https://rawlingsopticians.co.uk/blog-maui-jim-2019-18-07.php>).



Sunglasses Price Promise

Rawlings sunglasses are very competitively priced and usually considerably cheaper than department stores and Airport Tax free Shopping. However, if you should find an identical complete pair of glasses at a high street optician within 5 miles of this practice or in UK Airport Tax Free Shopping at a lower price within one month of purchase we will refund the difference. [See our website for more details](https://rawlingsopticians.co.uk/sunglasses.php) (<https://rawlingsopticians.co.uk/sunglasses.php>).

We stock the latest designer collections from well-known names and have a wide range of designer, sports and everyday sunglasses which can be made to your prescription.

Mask issues

Where to start? We all hate them but they are here to stay for some time and clearly necessary in the fight to control Covid 19 from spreading.

Appearance wise, with half your face covered your glasses become even more important – that is the one part of your face that is visible!! So if you are bored with your glasses you might want to go for a new look now or have a second pair to have some variety. There is a whole new fashion opportunity to be had in co-ordinating your mask with your glasses – with such a variety of masks available now this should be easy. Two tone frames can work particularly well for this. You may also want to choose a frame that does not interfere with your mask or choose one with nose pads to try and reduce the steaming up issue.

Steamed up glasses from mask wear is a problem for many of us. Here are some tips on how to reduce the issue:



- First of all, make sure your mask has a wire strip at the top so you can mould it around the contour of your nose.
- A second pair of glasses kept in a warm pocket is ideal, so that you can swap if the first pair steam up. This is handy for men who may have a shirt or jacket pocket but a bit trickier for ladies.
- A folded tissue under the top of the mask can help, fold it into a one inch strip about 3-4 inches long and place it just below the wire.
- A strip of micropore tape across the top does solve the problem for many but daily use of this can cause skin irritation long term for some people so unless it is vital due to your occupation it is probably not the best option for all day every day.
- Anti-fogging solutions are available but care is needed to make sure they won't damage the lens surface
- Contact lenses can be supplied to most prescriptions these days although under current guidelines new contact lens fits can only be done in essential cases
- Prescription sports glasses can be supplied, which due to their close fitting and wrap around characteristics do not tend to steam up as much – ask us for more information.

Rawlings during Lockdown

Those of you who were unable to read our [blog](https://rawlingsopticians.co.uk/blog.php) (https://rawlingsopticians.co.uk/blog.php), or did not require our services during lockdown, may not know that we remained open and helped hundreds of patients when many opticians closed completely.

Rawlings Opticians operated a vital urgent and essential service supporting the NHS throughout this time. We had to launch a telemedicine service overnight in order to enable patients to access care for their eye problems without visiting a hospital or GP surgery. To reduce the risks in A&E and GP surgeries, patients were redirected to Rawlings and the other small number of opticians participating in the service.

Face to face appointments were not possible until PPE was available which frustratingly took some weeks – of course the hospitals and care homes quite correctly needed it before us as sight threatening or life threatening eye problems could still be triaged by us and sent to hospital where necessary and this happened on a regular basis. However, once the PPE arrived, we needed to change our processes again as this meant allowing patients into our consulting rooms, necessitating the now very familiar cleaning and disinfecting procedures along with correct use and disposal of PPE.



As well as dealing with emergency eye problems we also managed to continue to supply contact lenses and organise home delivery of contact lenses so that supplies were not disrupted. In the early days there were some hiccups due to Royal Mail and other delivery agencies being short staffed, which led to pile ups in sorting offices with contact lenses trapped amongst the chaos; but this settled down within a few weeks.

A lot of people seemed to step on or sit on their glasses during lockdown and it seems not enough people had an up to date spare pair so we had a steady stream of 'emergency' repairs to deal with and where possible we tried to help out with home delivery so that people could follow government guidelines regarding not leaving their house.

All in all our skeleton team of Optometrists (self-titled 'The Covid Crew') and Opticians worked their socks off all through lockdown keeping all of our patients looked after, and we are very grateful for their hard work!

IN THIS ISSUE

What has changed at Rawlings since Lockdown?

We are open for business 'almost as usual' – but what does this mean?

Working from home

Many of our patients have found themselves continuing to work from home...

Outdoor life

Social distancing advice has made those of us not tied to a computer working from home spending more time outdoors than ever!

Mask issues

Where to start? We all hate them but they are here to stay for some time...

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Those of you who were unable to read our blog, or did not require our services during lockdown...

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