

All About Sunglasses

Any time of year, sunglasses should be a part of your daily health-consciousness routine. Sunglasses are not just for summers on the beach anymore or just for looking cool and mysterious. Designer sunglasses are no longer just for wealthy movie stars. Sunglasses are crucial in protecting your eyes from the permanent damaging effects of Ultra Violet radiation.

Sunglasses in some form have been around for a very long time. Roman Emperor Nero made sunglasses by watching gladiator competitions through polished light emerald green gems held up to his eyes. The true invention of sunglasses was somewhere between 1268 and 1289.

Before 1430, smoky quartz, flat-paned sunglasses were worn by Judges in the Courts of China to conceal any expression in their eyes. Prescription sunglasses were developed in Italy in 1430 and were later used by the Chinese Judges. In the mid 18th Century, James Ayscough developed blue and green corrective lenses, beginning the use of sunglasses for correcting optical impairments.

Until 1730 when Edward Scarlett invented hardened sidepieces, there were problems in keeping eyeglasses propped on the nose. Glasses frames had been made from leather, bones and metal and sidepieces began as silk strips of ribbon that looped around the ears. Instead of loops, the Chinese added ceramic weights to the ends of the ribbons. Benjamin Franklin's invention of bifocal lenses followed in 1780.

By the 20th Century, sunglasses were used to protect the eyes from the sun. In 1929 Sam Foster's "Foster Grants" were the first mass-produced sunglasses and they began the trend of sunglasses for fashion.

In the 1930's the Army Air Corps asked Bausch & Lomb to develop sunglasses that would efficiently reduce high-altitude sun glare for pilots and they came up with dark green tinted sunglasses that absorbed light through the yellow spectrum.

Edward H. Land had invented the Polaroid filter and by 1936 he used it in making sunglasses and soon, sunglasses became "cool." Movies stars began wearing sunglasses to hide behind and for fashion. Aviator glasses became popular with the movie stars and the general public in 1937 after Ray Ban developed the anti-glare sunglasses using polarization. The longer lens was created to give more protection to pilots' eyes from light reflecting off their control panels.

By the 1970's Hollywood stars and fashion designers made a huge impact on the

sunglasses market. Clothing designers and stars put their names on glasses and sunglasses and everyone had to have them. In 2007, stars are still hiding behind their oversized designer sunglasses, making fashion statements and protecting their eyes from the harmful effects of the Ultra Violet radiation. Today's trendy designer sunglasses are a status symbol; however, in order to be fashionable in sunglasses, you do not have to give up quality. Quality designer sunglasses can be polarized to reduce the glare of sunlight reflecting off surfaces like the highway, cars, water or snow. Polarized sunglasses work by blocking off horizontal light reflections and only let in vertical light reflections. The polarization of designer sunglasses makes them fashionable in other areas of lifestyle like golfing, boating, biking, swimming, fishing and aircraft flying.

Marketers of designer sunglasses target children who choose the same hot styles and brand-names as their parents and their idols. Sunglasses for children have Disney and cartoon characters in many colors, shapes and styles. Children's designer sunglasses can also be polarized to block the harmful UV radiation.

With modern technology and improvements, the making of sunglasses continues to evolve. We have gone from holding green gems up to our eyes to Oakley's 2004 sunglasses with digital audio players built in.