DOUBLE DUTY:
THE PATIENT AND PRACTICE POTENTIAL OF
DUAL CONTACT LENS & GLASSES WEAR

Spring 2023
IT’S A QUESTION WE ARE ALL USED TO HEARING, IF NOT ASKING: DO YOU WEAR CONTACT LENSES OR GLASSES?

On the surface, the premise is innocuous. Yet it positions these two methods of vision correction among friends, colleagues, and patients as an “either-or” selection, when the real choice lies in having the ability to pick between the two on any given day and time to suit our ever-changing environments.

That’s why the Contact Lens Institute, as part of our See Tomorrow initiative, recently commissioned a survey of U.S. adults to explore dual wear opportunities. Having an industry association with our specific focus advance glasses prescribing—in conjunction with increased contact lens wear, of course—may be unexpected. But we firmly believe that the greatest potential for consumer satisfaction and professional success has a foundation in holistic eye care.

Our findings identify current and potential market demand for dual wear, specify a range of situations and triggers that drive consumer preference, and suggest simple adjustments in practice that can create better interactions and outcomes for everyone. While some of the results affirm what we have long suspected, and others are surprising, all contribute toward a more informed and effective community of eye care professionals.

This report also incorporates the perspectives of several 2023 Contact Lens Institute Visionaries—optometrists, opticians, and technicians whose practical advice transforms this new data into actionable steps that can be implemented in your own office. We cannot thank them enough for their leadership and contributions.

On behalf of our members—Alcon, Bausch + Lomb, CooperVision, and Johnson & Johnson Vision—we invite you to embrace this new information, share the insights with your colleagues, and consider how dual wear can provide a better experience for practice and patient alike.

Sincerely,

Stan Rogaski  
Executive Director  
Contact Lens Institute

Michele Andrews, OD  
2023 Board Chair  
Contact Lens Institute

“OUR FINDINGS IDENTIFY CURRENT AND POTENTIAL MARKET DEMAND FOR DUAL WEAR, SPECIFY A RANGE OF SITUATIONS AND TRIGGERS THAT DRIVE CONSUMER PREFERENCE, AND SUGGEST SIMPLE ADJUSTMENTS IN PRACTICE THAT CAN CREATE BETTER INTERACTIONS AND OUTCOMES FOR EVERYONE.”
The See Tomorrow series from the Contact Lens Institute (CLI) explores consumer and professional perspectives surrounding issues that can influence contact lens fitting and wear. CLI began this effort in 2021, uncovering consumer sentiments specific to lifestyle changes that resulted from the pandemic and giving practitioners new ways to engage their patients.

In 2022, our efforts uncovered common myths and misconceptions that U.S. consumers had regarding contact lenses, then explored how contact lens interest and adoption showed remarkable resilience in the face of economic challenges.

This year, we turned our attention to investigate if the profession was optimizing the prescribing of both contact lenses and glasses for adults, with an eye on patient and practice success.

To do so, we commissioned Prodege, a global consumer insights firm, to conduct research for our newest report. From January 25 to February 1, 2023, 2,004 adults 18 years of age and older residing in the United States—all of whom used prescription vision correction—participated in a custom-designed survey using a proprietary online tool.

Respondents were balanced against the U.S. general population in regard to several demographic categories such as age, household income, location, and gender to present an accurate representation of the prescription vision-corrected public.

Among respondents, 70.6% reported using only glasses while 5.7% reported using only contact lenses (allowing for glasses as emergency backup only). About one in four (23.6%) shared they were dual wearers, alternating between contact lenses and glasses for various reasons.

67% said they had an eye doctor-administered exam within the past 12 months, and 69% reported having vision insurance.

### Survey Respondents

- **Female**: 50.9%
- **Male**: 47.5%
- **Other**: 1.3%
- **Prefer not to answer**: 0.3%

### AGE

- 13%: 18-24
- 17.9%: 25-34
- 18.5%: 35-44
- 19.3%: 45-54
- 14.6%: 55-64
- 8.4%: 65-74
- 8.3%: 75+

### HOUSEHOLD INCOME

- 15.6%: Less than $25,000
- 11.7%: $25,000 - $34,999
- 15.1%: $35,000 - $49,999
- 19.6%: $50,000 - $74,999
- 14.2%: $75,000 - $99,999
- 14.7%: $100,000 - $149,999
- 7.3%: $150,000 - $249,999
- 1.8%: $250,000 or more
APPRECIATE ORGANIC DUAL WEAR DEMAND

Existing dual wear habits are more significant than what might be expected. Consider that 23.6% of adults reported using both contact lenses and glasses—nearly a quarter of the U.S. prescription vision corrected population. Yet there’s even more opportunity.

Almost one in five (18%) glasses-only wearers are very interested in contact lenses, rating that desire as an 8, 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale. Expanding that range slightly (a 5-to-10 point ranking) yields 44% openness to considering contact lenses.

The same percentage of contact lens-only wearers (18%) are very interested in glasses (8-10 point ranking). With a similar range expansion, this leaps to 42%.

Those two groups alone—each with unrealized interest—represent at least one-third of patients walking through a practice’s door with a strong propensity to experience dual wear. It’s a significant untapped prescribing opportunity, ready to be acted on by the eye care community.

“By their own admission, more than a third of patients coming into our practices are very interested in wearing both contact lenses and glasses. That’s an incredible untapped opportunity for us, showing them what dual wear can bring to their lives.”
Shelby Brogdon, OD · McFarland Eye Care, Little Rock, Ark.
2023 Contact Lens Institute Visionary

Presenting All Available Options

It’s always surprising when I mention contact lenses as a method of vision correction, yet a patient appears shocked that no one has raised the option before. I’m equally surprised when I ask about glasses with my contact lens wearers, only to get a bashful look indicating they don’t own any.

Patients don’t know what they don’t know. These interactions reinforce the importance of discussing all available options, regardless of habitual prescription.

People want the luxury to choose what and how they wear their visual correction. My staff is trained to ask about contact lenses and glasses at different times during the examination process to emphasize all options. Simply asking glasses wearers, “Have you ever thought about contact lenses?” allows patients to consider the possibilities. For our contact lens wearers, we often discuss the importance of having a pair of glasses to provide flexibility. Our entire staff takes part in explaining how we can work with insurance plans to maximize benefits and alleviate cost concerns.

Ultimately, looking at the latest CLI data, patients want to take advantage of both contact lenses and glasses, but may not know how to ask. Our mission is to remove those barriers, so patients feel empowered.

Mark Schaeffer, OD
MyEyeDr, Birmingham, Ala.
2023 Contact Lens Institute Visionary

ABOUT
1 in 5
glasses-only wearers
VERY INTERESTED in CONTACT LENSES (18%)

24%
of adults use BOTH contact lenses and glasses

36%
untapped prescribing opportunity (18% + 18%)

ABOUT
1 in 5
contact lens-only wearers
VERY INTERESTED in GLASSES (18%)

Don’t miss an opportunity to prescribe both contact lenses and glasses.
A VOICE FOR CHOICE

Our research indicates that current dual wearers overwhelmingly like the ability to choose their own path. Having both contact lenses and glasses on hand empowers them to make the best choices for themselves each day.

About eight in 10 dual wear respondents agreed that having choice is a powerful benefit, including feeling their best in different situations (84%), accounting for how their eyes felt every day (82%), choosing their own look (81%), and gaining more control over their vision (77%). Three-quarters (74%) said having the option allowed them to customize their appearance based on different situations.

Offering informed, relevant choices is a common path to success—even in a society such as the U.S. where an overabundance of selections can be overwhelming. A recent peer review paper in the Journal of International Marketing found that, in relative terms, having too few choices impacts satisfaction much more negatively than having too many.

Patients want options. Why not give them the opportunity with dual wear?

Are You Asking the Right Questions?
Far too often I hear “I didn’t know that” from patients or that their last eyecare provider “didn’t tell me that.” The way I empower patients while retaining prescribing control is by letting them know they have options to choose from the start. Offering choice should begin before the patient makes it back to the exam room—ideally before they visit your office. The power and ability to choose is directly related to the information and education received beforehand. This means eyecare providers as well as all staff play critical roles to ensure that patients are informed and educated every step of the way.

Asking questions about vision, comfort and lifestyle coupled with “did you know?” phrases are one way to offer choice to patients and integrate the options with their reason for calling or visiting. A patient’s contact lens that may feel “comfortable” can still present visual challenges or not be suitable for all their day-to-day activities. For instance, ask a new generation experiencing presbyopia, “did you know we have lenses that can allow you see up close as well as far away?” This allows you the opportunity to discuss more about their lens options (multifocals), new technologies, and update their glasses (multiple pairs)—and gives your patients the power to choose.

Essence Johnson, OD, FAAO
Black Eyecare Perspective, Dallas, Texas
2023 Contact Lens Institute Visionary

Feel my best in different situations 84%
Account for how my eyes feel every day 82%
Choose how I want to look 81%
Have more control over my vision 77%
Customize appearance based on different situations 74%

n = 473
The Case for Contact Lens Options
I’m a firm believer in getting patients involved in selecting the best contact lenses for their eyes. Helping to establish expectations early, it is important to explain that certain lenses may be best for certain activities, depending on factors such as working distance, visual demands, and ocular surface status. Inquiring about hobbies is an important step to figuring out which contacts may be ideal for certain scenarios.

A patient’s daily activities may determine suitability for different contact lens modalities for workdays versus weekends. For example, I have many patients who opt for a daily multifocal contact lens when on the computer at work, but prefer a distance-only setup during weekends. Certain hobbies may have different visual demands (e.g., scuba diving, golfing, skiing, biking, tennis, and gaming). Patients who struggle with seasonal allergic conjunctivitis may be interested in opting for a daily disposable during allergy season, if they know that is an option. Finding which combination of contact lenses works empowers patient choice.

Regardless of modality chosen, educating patients about all of their options for daily living has proven to be an eye opener: many are interested in having contact lens options. Giving them a voice is a win-win for both patient and practice.

Jade Coats, OD
McDonald Rye Associates, Fayetteville, Ark.
2023 Contact Lens Institute Visionary

“A patient’s daily activities may determine suitability for different contact lens modalities for workdays versus weekends. For example, I have many patients who opt for a daily multifocal contact lens when on the computer at work, but prefer a distance-only setup during weekends. Certain hobbies may have different visual demands (e.g., scuba diving, golfing, skiing, biking, tennis, and gaming). Patients who struggle with seasonal allergic conjunctivitis may be interested in opting for a daily disposable during allergy season, if they know that is an option. Finding which combination of contact lenses works empowers patient choice.”
SURVEY THE SITUATION

Our needs change throughout the day. Clothing and outerwear, food and beverage, entertainment choices and more vary according to time and place. So why should prescription eyewear be any different?

Our research suggests that identifying situational wear can increase consumers’ consideration of embracing both contact lenses and glasses.

A Sense of Place
Among dual wearers, contact lenses are clearly preferred for out of home situations by factors up to 10X. Glasses are strongly preferred for working at home by a 3X factor.

Showcasing contact lenses for active settings may especially resonate with patients. 81% of dual wearers say they are likely to choose contact lenses for fitness/sports use and 33% of dual wearers report wearing their contacts more over the past year for such activities. Yet among glasses-only wearers who discussed contact lenses during their last eye exam, sports and fitness applications were only raised 9% of the time.

Heading out to spend time with friends also triggered more dual wearers to favor contact lenses. Whether dining out or going on a date, 64% would reach for their lenses first. A night on the town saw contact lens preference rise to 72%.

And what about travel? As America gets back on the road and takes to the air, glasses and contact lenses alike are being worn. Up in the sky, 40% of dual wearers have their glasses on, with 38% choosing contact lenses. Along the country’s highways, that reverses, with 44% preferring their contact lenses while 37% prefer their glasses.

Day and Time
Discussing wear by the day of the week and time of day present additional possibilities to suggest dual wear.

Dual wearers tend to use their contact lenses less on the weekends, with 55% preferring them on Saturdays and 39% on Sundays. The group also wears their contact lenses more during the midday (77%) and afternoon (84%) hours, compared to morning (55%) and evening (53%). This presents the chance to discuss dual wear, early and end-of-day.

Lifestyle Listening
When I first enter the exam room, I make a point of starting a conversation with my patient before I ever sit down at the computer and open the exam record. I want my patients to know that I am focused on their specific needs and concerns, and getting to know them as a person is essential to that mission! The questions you ask your patient during this time need to be targeted to get the information you need—“everything is fine” is not all that helpful as an answer. Here are some of my go-to open-ended questions that drive multiple pair prescribing and open the door to consideration of dual contact lens and glasses wear:

- What don’t you like about your current glasses (or contact lenses)? I customize this based on what they wore to their exam.
- Are there hobbies or activities where your current glasses (or contact lenses) aren’t working well?

Many of my patients that are working long hours on their computers from home have turned to glasses as their primary work correction, but they get frustrated with glasses for social events, vacations, or fitness/outdoor activities. This is a great opportunity to discuss part time contact lens wear. I also discuss with these patients how many times a week they would like to wear contact lenses.

Where in the past I’ve typically recommended daily disposable lenses to part time wearers, I’ve found many work-from-home patients plan to wear contacts a few hours every day when they are done with screen-based work; this group has been very happy in reusable monthly disposable lens modalities so they aren’t “wasting” a daily disposable lens for just 1-2 hours of wear time each day. Listening to patients about their specific lifestyle needs instead of having a “one size fits all approach” leads to the best success.

Jennifer Lyon, OD
TrueVision Eye Care, Raleigh, N.C.
2023 Contact Lens Institute Visionary

“LISTENING TO PATIENTS ABOUT THEIR SPECIFIC LIFESTYLE NEEDS INSTEAD OF HAVING A “ONE SIZE FITS ALL APPROACH” LEADS TO THE BEST SUCCESS.”
SURVEY THE SITUATION (CONT’D)

Contact lens comfort strategies, plus having contact lens wearers consider additional glasses options for those times.

It’s worth noting that among all contact lens respondents, 68% wear them five or more days per week, and 54% wear them between 8-12 hours per day. They play a large role in their lives—something for the eye care community to celebrate and acknowledge.

Our Changing World

About half (48%) of dual wearers’ preference for vision correction has changed over the past year, with several reasons emerging as most prominent. Convenience is cited by people wearing their contact lenses more (60%) and glasses more (56%)—reinforcing why this dimension matters to patients.

In addition, those relying more on their contact lenses cite spending more non-work time out of the home (30%) and having been prescribed newer contact lenses (24%). People wearing glasses more point to a desire to save money (33%) and making use of recently purchased frames/lenses (24%).

There’s little doubt that understanding patients’ lifestyles opens the door even wider for situational prescribing.

“Many times, patients need reminders on healthy contact lens wear-and-care behaviors to keep their eyes feeling great—including the role of glasses.”

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM DUAL USERS PREFERENCES FOR SITUATIONAL WEAR

81% of dual wearers prefer contact lenses for fitness/sports activities

33% of dual wearers have used contacts more for fitness/sports activities only 9% of the time

81% of dual wearers have used contacts more for fitness/sports activities over the past year

Lisa Hornick, OD
Stanford Ranch Optometry, Rocklin, Calif.
2023 Contact Lens Institute Visionary
Recognizing Patient Reliance
Contact lenses play a major role in our patients’ lives, and can influence their levels of physical activity, work performance, and self-confidence. At the start of an exam, I ask my patients questions about their frequency and hours of use, situations in which they wear their lenses, their replacement schedule, and hygiene regimen. Based on their responses, I can learn a lot regarding their contact lens dependence.

Most of my patients, no matter the level of refractive error, rely on their contact lenses for the special moments in their lives: birthdays, weddings, dates, and major presentations. Contact lenses provide them with clear vision and the ability to look their best whether they chose to wear makeup or embrace their natural appearance.

The fear of breaking their glasses can restrict patients from doing the things they love. Patients turn to their contact lenses for freedom during exciting times such as visiting trampoline parks, running marathons, horseback riding and much more. They report that physical activity is easier with contact lenses.

Lastly, patients trust their contact lenses for everyday tasks—at work, while driving, during computer use, and cooking—becoming important parts of their daily routine. According to CLI research, about seven in 10 wear them five or more days per week, and more than half wear them between 8-12 hours per day.

A patient’s purpose for loving their contact lenses is nearly limitless. For this reason, my approach to prescribing is very patient-centric. I am my patient’s teammate and health advocate. As a team, we decide which lens will be best for their lifestyle. As their health advocate, I thoroughly educate each person on hygiene, wear time, and replacement schedules to keep them safe, happy, and enjoying the most visual freedom possible.

Dana Shannon, OD, FAAO
Vision Salon Eye Care Associates, Blue Island, Ill. 2023 Contact Lens Institute Visionary
**THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF DUAL WEAR CANDIDATES**

The CLI research isolated several demographic factors that may help the eye care community identify dual wear candidates.

Income and purchasing power matter, since dual wear naturally requires greater spending. 70% of dual wearers have a household income of >$50,000 (compared to 61% contact lens-only and 49% glasses-only respondents), and 62% are employed full time (compared to 50% contact lens-only and 32% glasses-only respondents). Three in four (75%) dual wearers have vision insurance (compared to 67% for both contact lens-only and glasses-only respondents).

That’s not to say that patients’ interest is solely linked to income. The CLI 2022 Remarkable Resilience report demonstrated the extremely high value placed on vision, contact lenses, and glasses, even in times of economic challenge. Consumers will invest in products and services that make their lives better, with vision correction among the most powerful of all categories.

Education is another indicator. 83% of dual wearers have at least some college experience—six to 10 points higher than contact lens-only and glasses-only wearers. This survey found that men (58%) are as likely to be dual wearers as women, suggesting that all genders are keen to wear both for fashion and function.

**Portrait of a Dual Wearer**

- **70%** have household income of $50K+
- **62%** employed full time
- **83%** have some college experience
- **75%** have vision insurance

*Inna Lazar, OD  
Greenwich Eye Care, Greenwich, Conn.  
2023 Contact Lens Institute Visionary*

“**NEW PATIENTS TO MY PRACTICE OFTEN DO NOT WEAR CONTACT LENSES, SO I MAKE A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO LET THEM KNOW THEY’RE A CANDIDATE. THAT INCLUDES PEOPLE WHO DROPPED OUT LONG AGO BECAUSE OF PRESBYOPIA—I INTRODUCE THEM TO ADVANCEMENTS IN MULTIFOCALS, HELPING THEM FEEL LIKE NEW PEOPLE!”*
Recognizing Patient Reliance

CLC invited The Vision Council, with whom it partners to expand the reach of See Tomorrow initiatives through venues such as Vision Expo, to share additional perspectives on dual wear opportunities based on its own consumer research.

At The Vision Council, the trade association representing the optical industry, we conduct surveys every month asking U.S. consumers about their eyecare and eyewear purchasing habits and behaviors. We analyzed survey data from 2022 with over 60,000 consumers to better understand dual wearers. Here are some key characteristics we’ve identified.

**DUAL WEARERS SHOP ONLINE**

Of all the characteristics of dual wearers we examined, purchase channel stood out as having a clear correlation to dual wearer status. Those who made their most recent eyewear purchase online were far more likely to be dual wearers (53%) than those who bought their eyewear in store (20%). As online retailers often offer lower priced options, dual wearers could be intentionally seeking out deals online. Our survey research on purchase channel shows that while in-person glasses buyers tend to spend more out-of-pocket per purchase, online buyers have made purchases more recently and intend to do so again sooner. Online buyers are also more likely to buy multiple pairs of glasses. Moreover, online buyers tend to have higher household incomes, but are more likely to be focused on affordability when shopping for eyewear. Those with higher household incomes are also more likely to be dual wearers. Practices looking to cultivate more dual wearers among their patients may want to consider offering eyewear e-commerce on their website or highlighting their value products to their patients.

**MILLENNIALS ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE DUAL WEARERS**

Our research also showed a clear generational divide when it came to dual wearers: 39% of Millennials who use eyewear were identified as dual wearers, holding all other factors equal, while 32% of Gen Z, 26% of Gen X, and 11% of Boomers were dual wearers. This aligns with multiple studies that suggest that Millennials value product choice and variety more than other generations. Notably, the youngest adults, Gen Z, were not as likely to be dual wearers as Millennials. This could be due to the cost of purchasing multiple eyewear products being more of a deterrent for these younger adults.

**A RECENT EYE EXAM INCREASES THE LIKELIHOOD THAT A PATIENT WILL BE A DUAL WEARER**

Additionally, our analysis indicated that having a recent interaction with an eyecare provider mattered—individuals who had an eye exam within the last year were more likely to be dual wearers (25%) than those who had not had a recent exam (16%). The conversations that patients have with their eyecare providers make an impact on their eyewear purchases. In another study, we found that 46% of those who bought contact lenses said that their eyecare provider had a large or very large influence on that purchase.

By understanding the needs, preferences, and characteristics of dual wearers, the optical industry can better serve this growing segment of the population and capitalize on this significant market opportunity. To learn more about The Vision Council’s research, visit https://thevisioncouncil.org/optical-market-research.

“We found that 46% of those who bought contact lenses said that their eyecare provider had a large or very large influence on that purchase.”

Alysse Henkel
Senior Director of Market Research and Analytics
The Vision Council
Communicating Dual Wear Value

“Glasses and contacts? I’m not sure that I can afford to pay for both this year.” Though patients may prefer having the flexibility of both contact lenses and glasses, it is common to hear concerns of affordability.

When patients voice concern on costs, I like to review what modality and features of contact lenses may be the best for them. Are they on the computer all day? Maybe we explore contact lens options with advanced wettability technology. Do they love being outdoors? There are great options with UV protection. Once we determine the best contact lens option, we then discuss spectacle lens features that can enhance a patient’s life, such as visual fatigue and transitions technology. Now the patient can understand the value that dual wear can provide them in daily life, for convenience, comfort, and ocular health.

Lastly, we discuss contact lens manufacturer rebates. These may help make dual wear become an even more affordable and attractive option to patients.

Ariel Cerenzie, OD, FAAO, FSLS
Charlotte Contact Lens Institute, Charlotte, N.C.
2023 Contact Lens Institute Visionary
CULTIVATE CONSISTENT CONVERSATIONS

The greatest possible method to increase patient consideration of dual contact lens and glasses wear may also be the easiest yet most underutilized: talking about it.

Three in four (75%) glasses-only wearers reported that contact lenses were not discussed at their most recent appointment, although such conversation would help at least one in five of them strongly consider wear. 19% would have been motivated to act with a general exchange, and 23% would have their interest piqued by hearing about contact lens advancements.

Of those glasses-only wearers who did talk about contact lenses, 37% report they personally raised the topic—not their doctor or staff.

Switching gears, almost half (45%) of contact lens-only wearers report that glasses were not discussed during their most recent exam. Where that did occur, more than half of the conversations (56%) were about backup options, with about one-third (31%) noting they were advised to update their backup prescription.

This data is consistent with CLI’s 2022 “Revealed” report, which found that eye care providers are missing the opportunity to talk about contact lens options with two-thirds or more of patients, whether as situational alternative for glasses or reading glasses, to help eliminate fogging, and more. There’s no better time to talk than now—that same report illustrated that almost seven out of 10 (68%) people turn to their eye doctor to learn about contact lenses. If you’re not educating patients, who is?

The Power of Five Minutes
From my perspective, talking about glasses and contact lenses is as important as asking for a patient’s chief complaint. I have made it part of my routine—something I spend five minutes on during every exam.

It helps to talk about the versatility and freedom of choosing glasses and contact lenses depending on occasion. If someone does not wear contact lenses, I bring up that they might qualify for contact lenses, noting the different modalities, types, and options available. Most of these patients think they simply “can’t wear contact lenses,” when in reality no one has taken the time to educate them about the possibilities.

When a patient does not want contact lenses after the discussion, I have planted a seed for future consideration when we talk next.

If a patient is a contact lens wearer, it is my job to make sure they have a current pair of glasses. It is important to educate about the importance of glasses in the event of running out of their contact lens supply, should they have an infection, and even to give their eyes a rest at the end of the day if they want.

In my practice, it is never a question of glasses or contact lenses; it is explaining the benefits of dual wear. Education is key and can take as little as five minutes to change a patient’s way of thinking.

Angelica Cifuentes, OD
Bye Dry Eyes, Miami, Fla.
2023 Contact Lens Institute Visionary

45% of contact lens wearers report that GLASSES WERE NOT DISCUSSED during their most recent exam

75% of glasses wearers reported that CONTACT LENSES WERE NOT DISCUSSED at their most recent appointment

Don’t miss opportunities to expand your patients’ knowledge about contact lenses and glasses.
Addressing Total Vision Needs

From an optician’s perspective, it’s important to remember that oftentimes we get to spend more time with patients than the doctors, which translates into more opportunities to determine, and provide for, the patients’ total vision needs. Whether we’re discussing additional pairs of glasses or educating a prospective contact lens wearer on the ways in which contact lenses can enrich their quality of life, we should embrace every opportunity to do so.

This said, CLI findings indicate that, generally, this is not taking place. When contact lenses were not discussed with 75% of glasses wearers during their most recent exam, and glasses not discussed with 45% of contact lens wearers, there is clear upside opportunity to better address patients’ total vision needs.

Many practitioners would agree, due to reduced insurance reimbursement rates, in addition to continuing to recover from COVID financial losses, seeing more patients has become a necessary means for survival. However, while this is the reality in many practices, it may affect the overall patient experience.

To ensure that all patients are provided the best eyewear recommendations to meet the demands of their day-to-day lives, it’s vital that doctors and opticians alike take the time to determine the patients’ needs by cultivating consistent conversations. Only then can recommendations for the best solutions be made.

Andrew S. Bruce, LDO, ABOM, NCLE-AC
ASB Optolianry Education Services, Vancouver, Wash.
2023 Contact Lens Institute Visionary

“Whether we’re discussing additional pairs of glasses or educating a prospective contact lens wearer on the ways in which contact lenses can enrich their quality of life, we should embrace every opportunity to do so.”

Patrick Sayo
Drs. Farkas, Kassalow, Resnick and Associates, P.C., New York, N.Y.
2023 Contact Lens Institute Visionary

“Understanding more about our patients’ lives—actively listening and engaging in conversation—helps pinpoint where dual wear could make a difference. That’s one more way to build trust, deepen our relationship, grow practice loyalty, and improve adherence to the recommendations we make.”

Patrick Sayo
Drs. Farkas, Kassalow, Resnick and Associates, P.C., New York, N.Y.
2023 Contact Lens Institute Visionary
TRIGGERING TRIAL

With so many patients primed to experience the benefits of dual wear, our latest research highlights several actions that practices can implement to help move them along that path.

Glasses-Only Wearers

65% have never worn contact lenses
21% have not tried contact lenses in more than 11 years

Among glasses-only wearers, contact lens trials hold promise, but are largely underutilized. 32% of that patient population said that a free trial would increase their consideration. Yet among the subset who reported that contact lenses were discussed at their most recent exam, only 10% were offered trials of any type (5% in-office trial, 2% trial for frame try-ons, and 3% take home trial).

First-time wearers and dropouts are both dual wear candidates. 65% of glasses-only respondents report they have never worn contact lenses, and 21% have not tried them in more than 11 years. Suggesting trial for the first time—the all-important conversation—and offering former wearers to re-experience more advanced contact lens designs and materials has a strong potential for success.

Cost is always on the minds of practices—perhaps more so than patients. While our results indicate it is not a significant driver, some pricing considerations may help. Only one in five or fewer of glasses-only wearers indicated that discounting would make them more seriously consider contact lenses, i.e., a contact lenses/glasses bundle discount (20%), a contact lenses standalone discount (15%), and waiving contact lenses-specific fees (15%). Illustrating the daily cost of wear was not a significant consideration driver (16%), nor was availability of a payment plan (11%) or free home delivery (11%).

Making Full & Frequent Use of Trial Lenses

There are instances when a patient may want to discontinue contact lens use, such as dissatisfaction with vision or dryness. Before agreeing with their decision to return to wearing glasses only, we first offer trials for other contact lenses for at-home consideration. This increases our chances of retaining the patient as a contact lens wearer for the upcoming year and, if successful, the person keeps benefiting from the convenience of a vision correction alternative each day.

We also take this as an opportunity to promote new options that may help patients, such as converting a monthly lens wearer to a daily lens or switching to more breathable materials, if necessary. Making full and frequent use of contact lens trials has not only played an important role in the success of our practice, but in the success of our patients as well.

Klaus Ito, OD, Diplo. ABO, FAAO
Ocean Park Optometry, Santa Monica, Calif.
2023 Contact Lens Institute Visionary

Importance of Trials

GLASSES ONLY WEARPERS:

32% say that a free contact lens trial would increase consideration

BUT ONLY 10% WERE OFFERED CONTACT LENS TRIALS OF ANY TYPE AT THEIR MOST RECENT EXAM
5% IN-OFFICE TRIAL
2% TRIAL FOR FRAME TRY-ONS
3% TAKE HOME TRIAL

CONTACT LENS-ONLY WEARPERS:

1 OUT OF 3 WERE OFFERED THE CHANCE TO LOOK AT GLASSES IN THE OFFICE AT THEIR MOST RECENT EXAM
5% WERE OFFERED THE OPPORTUNITY TO LOOK AT GLASSES CHOICES ONLINE

n = 1,416
n = 115
TRIGGERING TRIAL (CONT’D)

Contact Lens-Only Wearers
Unlike their glasses-only counterparts, contact lens-only wearers are looking at cost when considering dual wear. 45% say that a glasses/contact lens discount bundle would increase their interest, while 27% say a standalone glasses discount would make a difference.

Where glasses conversations did occur among this group, only one in three contact lens-only wearers reported being offered the chance to look at glasses in the office, and only 5% reported being offered the opportunity to look at choices online.

What about the fashion and style appeal of glasses for contact lens-only wearers, given how they can shape a person’s look? About one in five would appreciate frames especially chosen and styled for them. Interestingly, among those who had a glasses conversation at their last exam, less than one in 10 were told they look good in glasses (9%) or that they may appreciate a newer/more stylish frame (9%) as a contact lens backup.

Learning from Dual Wearers
What can we learn from current dual wearers? Plenty. When asked directly about why they choose their contact lenses or glasses more, this group’s responses offer insights for recommending adoption of the other type of vision correction.

Convenience is an oft-cited theme. When choosing to wear their glasses, 37% of this population mentions convenience as a factor, with another 37% specifically stating they don’t feel like putting their contact lenses in at the time. Similarly, when choosing to use their contact lenses, 31% say it is convenience related.

When contact lenses get the nod, 49% say it’s because they offer a better experience for physical activities, reinforcing our situational wear findings. Vision comes into play, too, with 36% of dual wearers noting they reach for their contact lenses to avoid fogged glasses and 29% for better sight overall.

Although the latest frames tend to get more attention when it comes to a person’s appearance, contact lenses play a sizable role. When dual wearers choose their contact lenses, 39% say the reason is related to self-confidence and 34% note a better fit with their other fashion choices.

And what about comfort, one of the most commonly discussed aspects of eyewear? If picking up their glasses, 60% of dual wearers say it’s to give themselves a break from contact lens wear. Yet at the same time, 28% say their comfort is better in contact lenses—another opportunity to discuss newer products that offer comfort advantages.

Mastering the Hand Off
Ensuring that patients follow through on what you recommend in the exam lane takes a team—and well-executed hand offs at every step of the visit.

Something I hear from patients is “I only wear contacts because I don’t look good in glasses.” Every contact lens wearer needs to have glasses, although some refuse to wear them because of their awful memory of prior experiences. So change that memory!

I always tell someone in that situation that they haven’t been styled properly and everyone can look great in glasses. Then I make sure to get them excited about letting my optician help, handing off while saying “My optician is the best! She will help you... trust me!” This really makes the patient feel confident that they will find the right pair of glasses and that they have expert assistance. This also makes my stuff feel more confident, knowing I think they are the best and that together we are making patients change their tune.

The same goes for patients who have never worn contacts—they respond well to this kind of hand off. Most are nervous about touching their eyes; in fact, the latest CLI data says that 46% of glasses-only wearers. Calm their fears like I do, saying, “Amanda is the best and will help you. Don’t worry!” If they are struggling, I give them a boost of encouragement, saying, “Take a deep breath. You got this!”

The trial experience starts with us and ends with us—make sure everyone on your team gets involved to make it a good one.

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2023 Contact Lens Institute Visionary

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Managing Common Misperceptions

Past CLI consumer research uncovered common myths that could be holding back some consumers from considering contact lenses. The latest findings build on that work, highlighting factors that we should consider proactively discussing with patients, especially since I have found that many are shy to bring up specific concerns without prompting.

Among glasses-only wearers, almost six in 10 (58%) believe that glasses are “safer” than contact lenses. There are likely broad individual definitions of what constitutes “safe,” so this bears exploring with hesitant patients. Another one in two believe that contact lenses can become lost or stuck behind the eye.

As much as we know how far contact lenses have come in terms of advances in design and materials, 46% of glasses-only wearers say they perceive them to be uncomfortable. This presents an opportunity to encourage trial in the office and at home. Education can also help overcome worries about not being able to touch their eye (46%) and handling difficulty (45%).

At the same time, we also need to keep talking with contact lens-only wearers about developments in glasses that can make dual wear more enjoyable than ever. 70% of this group believes their contact lenses provide better vision than glasses, and 38% believe their prescription would lead to undesirably thick lenses. Raising new options for these patients might open the door for reconsideration—they don’t know what they don’t know.

Like so many things in life, overcoming anxieties and fears—especially those with roots in outdated information or urban legend—starts with a conversation. It’s up to us to take the first step.

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We live in a world built on the power & principle of choice. Yet for decades, most vision corrected adults have had little opportunity to choose glasses or contact lenses throughout the course of their day, to meet new challenges head-on with increased confidence, optimal convenience, and outstanding vision. With this latest research from the Contact Lens Institute, and the professionalism and commitment of the eye care community, the patient and practice opportunities of dual wear are well within reach.

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