

# Saying goodbye to specs and lenses

Nobody wears glasses or contact lenses out of choice and so it is not surprising that many have sought, or are considering laser treatment.

To the cynic it can sound too good to be true; a laser can be shone in their eyes and within a couple of days their sight is restored! If you actually speak to people who have had the procedure done, though, the response is overwhelmingly positive.

Choosing a reputable laser clinic is of paramount importance of course. Some operators are renowned for overcharging, urging patients that it is not worth 'compromising on' their eyes and others have a habit of pushing people in to laser procedures, driven by commission - a push which can often mean ineligible patients turn up for treatment but are sent home because laser correction is either impossible or would lead to minimal improvement.

This is what has prompted Accuvision, with clinics in London, Birmingham and Leeds to set up a Different business model. Its potential and existing clients are seen by the same optometrist before, during and after treatment and the latest equipment is on hand so eyes are properly checked to ensure a person can be told there and then if laser treatment is possible and would be beneficial. Crucially, none of the optometrists are on commission

Whilst patients need at least a day or two for their sight to improve she was 'sure', despite eyes watering with drops, that she could read the ticker at the bottom of the BBC News24 channel on show in reception.

## **Free to ski**

Jackie, who does the administration for her husband's hairdressing salon in Cheam, Surrey was attending a one year post-op check-up and was full of the benefits of having her eyes' back! Like many people approaching 50, or over 50, she was given Monovision. This saw her dominant eye corrected for long vision and her weaker eye corrected for near vision so that, thanks to some filtering in the brain, her sight is restored.

'It's just great not to have to wear Glasses under my goggles when I ski and just jump in and out of a pool or the sea on a summer holiday without thinking about it," she enthuses.

"I used to do aqua aerobics in my Glasses because I could only wear contacts for three hours before they started to be too sore. So it's been great to get proper sight back and the surgery 'took instantly". I must have looked like a mad woman walking

and so aren't under pressure to sell laser correction or 'up sell ' additional treatments.

The InSight writing team spent an Afternoon at Accuvision's clinic in Parsons Green, southwest London to Ask clients and potential clients what their experiences with laser care had been so far.

One patient, Jean, had come all the way from Hartlepool because the equipment in the London clinic is sophisticated enough to judge whether borderline cases, like her, have a cornea that is thick enough to allow treatment

Most laser treatments re shape the cornea but to do so, a tiny, circular slither of eye lining needs to be removed by a specialised device called a microkeratome or a laser to ensure the eye is not compromised. The circular piece reattaches or re-grows itself in a short space of time and, of course, the whole procedure is carried out under a local anaesthetic.

Jean's understandable nerves were Turned into elation when the clinic Was able to treat her and was amazed by the colours she saw during the procedure.

around the clinic as I left shouting out 'I can see, I can see!'

Justine, a clerical worker from Sussex was recommended by a friend to visit the Parsons Green clinic because she has had enough of wearing glasses or, rather, she has had enough of not wearing her glasses.

"I absolutely hate them so I don't Wear them and so I walk around in a Bit of a blur," she laughs.

"I'd been thinking about laser surgery for quite a while and got a quote for £4,000 near where I live but a friend told me to come to London and I was really surprised I've just been quoted £2,000. I just feared coming to London Would make it more expensive."

She claimed to have very few nerves About booking a slot a week later for her corrective surgery because, "the technology's been around for ages now and a couple of friends have had it done and are really happy with the results." Like many booking a treatment she had just lost a pair of glasses and thought the £300 or so it would cost to replace them would be far better put in to a longer-lasting procedure.