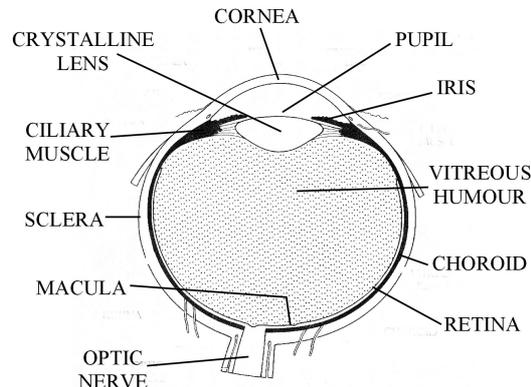


# lighting and the eye



The eyes depend on light to see. Obvious, when you think about it! Generally, the stronger the lighting, the better the vision.

## **Do the Eyes Become Less Sensitive to Light?**

Yes. As the eyes get older several things can happen: the pupils get smaller, the lens inside the eye becomes less transparent, and the cells in the retina (the light-sensitive layer inside the eye) don't work as well.

These together make vision more difficult, especially reading. Reading is even worse if the print is very small or of poor quality.

## **Does it Help to Have Stronger Reading Glasses?**

With stronger reading glasses, the book or magazine needs to be held closer, but this is not always comfortable or practical.

## **What Sort of Lighting is Best?**

Lighting at home is usually made to look nice rather than be practical. Chandeliers in the middle of the ceiling or wall lights throwing light upwards look great, but when it comes to really serious tasks like reading the classified football results in the Sunday paper, they are simply *too far away*. It is much better to have an angle poise lamp beside your chair, or a standard lamp behind it.

The choice of bulb is also very important – a 60 watt bulb in an angle poise lamp beside your shoulder will give much more light than a 200 watt bulb in the ceiling. For standard lamps you can get bulbs which have been silvered over the top. This silvering reflects all the light straight down, improving the lighting even more.

## What About Daylight?

The vision works best in daylight, and some people who normally require reading spectacles may well find that they can read quite well in bright sunlight without them. However, many people still need to use a lamp *in addition* to the light from the window, particularly during the winter.

## Low Energy Bulbs?

Low energy bulbs often give a level of light that is insufficient for comfortable reading as we get older. If you have a low energy bulb it can take several minutes to reach it's maximum brightness and it's maximum efficiency.

A good way of improving lighting but also keeping energy use low is to supplement your lighting with halogen side lights. These can be a good direct light with reasonable energy performance.

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