

## Why stronger glasses are not the answer.

“I don’t need a magnifier, I just need stronger glasses.”

“I can see really well with my magnifier; I just need that type of lens in my glasses.”

“My glasses are no use to me!”

Ordinary reading glasses do not magnify, they merely bring the print into sharp focus. This applies also to the cheap glasses often sold as “magnifying spectacles” in shops such as chemists, and in newspapers and magazines. When we are young our eyes can often adapt to read by themselves, but by the time we reach our mid forties most of us need help in the form of reading glasses, bifocals or varifocals.

If you have a visual impairment, then ordinary reading glasses will work in exactly the same way as they do for anyone else. The problem is that because of damage in the eye or seeing mechanism you may be unable to decode the image produced. Magnifying the image will often make reading possible again. Sometimes it may be necessary to make it only two or three times larger, but up to twenty times or more can be required.

If we want to use spectacles to magnify, then the only way to do it is to bring the object closer to our eyes. The

closer it is, the bigger we see it. High magnification requires a very close working distance together with thick glasses to focus the close object. To magnify by just four times means holding the print six centimetres, (two and a half inches,) from our eyes.

Because of this, many people find it much more convenient to use a stand magnifier, (which is rested on the print,) or a hand magnifier, (the Sherlock Holmes type,) as these can be used with a longer working distance from the eyes which is much more natural and comfortable.

When ordinary reading glasses are no longer adequate on their own, some people feel there is no point in wearing them. However when using a hand or stand magnifier the magnified print still needs to be brought into focus and in many cases wearing glasses will do this more effectively. Either reading or distance, (television,) glasses might be better, depending on the type of magnifier used and how close to the eyes it is held.