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**REVIEWED***By Chris at 10:41 am, Mar 25, 2020*

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How to Read Your Eyeglass Prescription



TODAY ON WEBMD



All About Pinkeye

Learn about causes, symptoms, and treatments.



Why Your Eyes Twitch

Simple annoyance or the sign of a problem?



Eye Allergies

Symptoms, triggers, and treatments.



Is Your Vision Getting Worse?

Warning signs, myths, and facts.

Video Loading...

RELATED TO EYE HEALTH

Eye Health Assessment
Vision Problems
Common Eye Problems
Pinkeye - Conjunctivitis
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Eyelid Problems
Children's Eye Health
Ocular Migraines
More Related Topics

When you look at your prescription for [eyeglasses](#), you will see numbers listed under the headings of OS and OD. They are Latin abbreviations: OS (oculus sinister) means the left [eye](#) and OD (oculus dextrus) means the right eye. Occasionally, you will see a notation for OU, which means something involving both [eyes](#). In general, the further away from zero the number on

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU



QUIZ

Is Your Eyesight Worsening?



SLIDESHOW

Tips for Contact Lens Wearers



SLIDESHOW

Tips for Healthier Eyes

[_top](#) [ARTICLE](#)

AS: How I Deal With the Emotional Pain



ARTICLE

How I Handle the Pain of AS



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What Is Herd Immunity?



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AS: How Food and Exercise Helped Me



ARTICLE

What Is Non-Radiographic Axial Spondyloarthritis?

your prescription, the worse your [eyesight](#) and the more [vision](#) correction (stronger prescription) you need. A “plus” (+) sign in front of the number means you are [farsighted](#), and a “minus” (-) sign means you are [nearsighted](#). These numbers represent diopters, the unit used to measure the correction, or focusing power, of the lens your eye requires. Diopter is

TOOLS & RESOURCES

[Why Can't I See Things up Close? Am I Farsighted?](#)

[Eye Health and Nearsightedness in Children and Adults](#)

[Astigmatism](#)

[Quiz: Is Your Eyesight Worsening?](#)

[Eye Health and Vision Basics](#)

[Tips for Contact Lens Wearers](#)

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often
abbreviated
"D."

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For example, if
your
prescription
says -1.00, you
have one
diopter of
[nearsightedness](#).

This is a fairly
mild amount
of
[nearsightedness](#)

. If you are
-4.25, that
means you
have 4 and 1/4
diopters of
nearsightedness.

This is more
nearsighted
than -1.00,
and requires
stronger
(thicker)
lenses.

Similarly,
+1.00 would
be a small
amount of

farsightedness

and +5 would
be more.

For people
who have
astigmatism,
there will be
three numbers
in your
prescription.

The general
form for
writing these
numbers is **S** x
C x **Axis**

The **S** refers to
the
"spherical"
portion of the
prescription,
which is the
degree of
nearsightedness
or
farsightedness
discussed
above.

The **C** refers to
the "cylinder"
or

[astigmatism](#),
and can be a
negative or a
positive
number. It
measures in
diopters the
degree of
[astigmatism](#)
that you have.
The bigger this
number, the
more
astigmatism
you have.
Astigmatism
most often is
caused by a
[cornea](#) that is
shaped more
like a football
than a
basketball.

The **Axis** is a
number
anywhere
between 0 and
180 degrees. It
reveals the
orientation of
the

astigmatism.

It is not
enough to
specify how
much
astigmatism
there is; you
have to know
where the
difference in
curvature is
taking place.

CONTINUE READING
BELOW

**YOU
MIGHT
LIKE**

Here are two
examples of
what
[prescriptions](#)
for [eyes](#)
with
astigmatism
could look
like:

-2.00 +1.50 x
180

+3.50 +3.00 x
45

The first

prescription
means that
the person has
2 diopters of
nearsightedness
with 1.5
diopters of
astigmatism
and an axis of
180 degrees.

The second
prescription
means that
the person has
3.5 diopters of
farsightedness,
3 diopters of
astigmatism
and an axis of
45 degrees.

WebMD Medical
Reference | Reviewed
by [Brian S. Boxer
Wachler, MD](#) on
December 7, 2017

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PICKS**

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What Is an Intraocular Lens Implant?

Are Allergies Affecting Your Eyes?

Should You Squeeze a Sty?

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Slideshow: Your Eyewear Guide for Vision, Sport, and Fashion

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