

Tips for Buying Sports Eye Protectors

Tens of thousands of people suffer eye injuries related to sports activities in a common year. Using the right kind of eye protection while playing sports can help prevent serious eye injuries and even blindness.

Prevent Blindness recommends that athletes wear eye protection when participating in sports. Prescription glasses, sunglasses and even occupational safety glasses do not provide adequate protection.

Sports eye protection is protective eye wear that could look like glasses with temples or straps or even shields attached to head gear. Eye protection comes in a variety of shapes and sizes. The eye protection you choose should fit securely and comfortably, and allow the use of a helmet if necessary.

The following guidelines can help you find a pair of sports eye protection right for you:

- If you wear prescription glasses, ask your eye doctor to fit you for prescription eye protection. If you're a monocular athlete (a person with only one eye that sees well), ask your eye doctor what sports you can play safely. Monocular athletes should always wear sports eye protection.
- Buy eye protection at sports specialty stores or optical stores. At the sports store, ask for a salesperson who is familiar with eye protectors to help you.
- When purchasing eye protection with lenses, make sure the lenses either stay in place or pop outward in the event of an accident. Lenses that pop in against your eyes can be very dangerous.
- Fogging of the lenses can be a problem when you are active. Some eye protection is available with anti-fog coating and others include side vents for additional ventilation. Try on different types to determine which is right for you.

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- Polycarbonate eye protection is the most impact resistant. Polycarbonate lenses are also thinner and lighter than plastic, shatterproof, and provide UV protection. For sports use, polycarbonate lenses must be used with protectors that meet or exceed the requirements of **ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) International**, a global standards development organization.
- Each sport has a specific ASTM standard, so check the package and/or protector to make sure the appropriate ASTM standard designation for the sport is on the product, before buying it. Do not buy the product if there is no ASTM code provided. **Learn more about ASTM standards about recommended sports eye protection and ASTM standards at: <https://preventblindness.org/recommended-sports-eye-protectors>**
- Eye protection which is certified by an authorized certification organization such as [Safety Equipment Institute \(SEI\)](#) or independently tested by an accredited laboratory provide independent verified evidence of protection and performance. Do not buy product that is labeled as 'ASTM Certified' as ASTM does not certify products.
- Sports eye protection should be padded or cushioned along the brow and bridge of the nose. Padding will prevent the eye protection from cutting your skin.
- Try on the eye protector to determine if it's the right size. Adjust the strap and make sure it's not too tight or too loose. If you bought your eye protection at an optical store, an optician can help you adjust the eye protector for a comfortable fit.

Until you get used to wearing eye protection, it may feel strange, but bear with it. It's better than suffering an eye injury — an injury that could possibly lead to the loss of vision!