

# Low vision and useful equipment

## What is low vision?

Low vision is when significant vision loss occurs and this vision loss cannot be corrected with glasses, contact lenses, or surgery.

This could be the result of an eye condition, such as macular degeneration or glaucoma, or it could be caused by an eye injury. This vision loss can present as having blurred vision, blind spots or tunnel vision.

People with low vision usually have some remaining useful vision – such as peripheral or limited central vision – and can learn to use their remaining vision.



**Sight  
Scotland**



**Sight Scotland  
Veterans**

# Aids and equipment for low vision

There are many aids and equipment, plus strategies and training, that people with low vision can use to live independently, and continue with everyday tasks and hobbies, such as reading, cooking, and getting out and about.

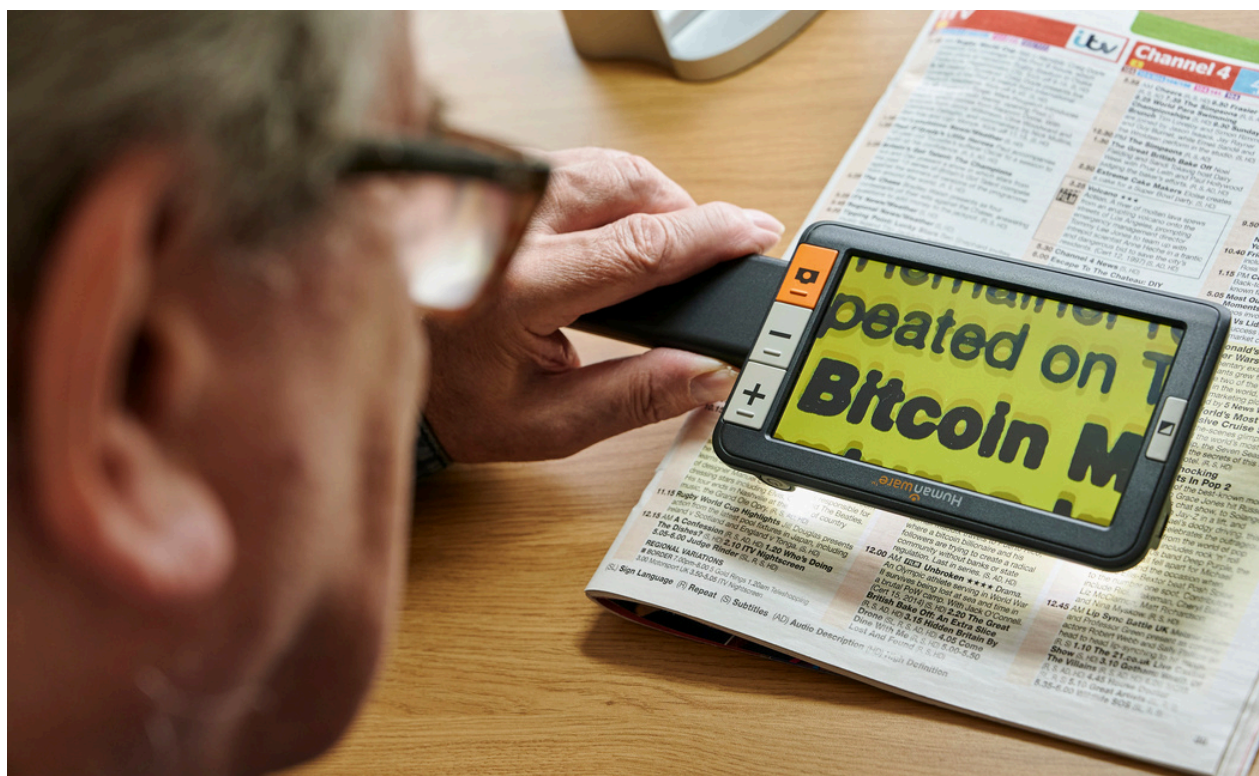
## Magnifiers

Magnifiers come in many shapes and sizes, so it's not a case of 'one magnifier fits all'. A low vision assessment is the most effective way to determine which strength and type of magnifier will meet your needs. The magnifier needed may depend on the task at hand: is the magnifier for reading a newspaper or book? Would you like to use it in the kitchen? We can help you find a suitable magnifier.



# Electronic magnifiers

Electronic magnifiers, although more expensive, have a greater range of magnification levels. You can also change the background and text colours of the image being shown. Electronic magnifiers can be an excellent choice for reading longer passages of text.



# Talking clocks

Talking clocks and watches read the time aloud when a button is pressed. Other options include extra-large clocks and watches. Small changes really can make a big difference.



# Text-to-speech readers

Text-to-speech audio readers are an option when reading is not possible with magnification. These aids scan printed material and read out information within seconds, enabling a user to access their mail, their newspaper, or their books.

# Keeping safe in the kitchen

A popular device used in the kitchen is a Liquid Level Indicator. This device measures the amount of water in a cup and alerts you when it is full. For example, when you pour hot water into a tea cup and the water reaches close to the top of the cup, the Liquid Level Indicator will play an audible beep. This helps you to pour the right amount of liquid and prevents spillage.





# Dycem colour contrast mats

You can make mealtime easier with the brightly coloured Dycem mat.

This easy-to-spot mat is placed under plates, or when cutting vegetables, to provide a strong colour contrast. The mat also provides a non-slip surface to make food or drink preparation easier. You can place it under cups, telephones, keys, or other items you want to find easily.



# Increased lighting

Good lighting is essential for low vision. People with low vision can require around five times more light than people without visual impairment.

Light that is even and overhead can make a great difference – as can task lighting, which can help when carrying out close work such as reading or cooking.





# Canes for navigation and safety

Using a cane can make it much safer and easier to navigate the outdoor environment.

Types of canes available include Guide Canes and Long Canes. Training in cane use is always recommended to ensure correct use and safety, so please don't hesitate to contact us at Sight Scotland or Sight Scotland Veterans. We can also offer your friends and family training on how to be an effective “sighted guide”.

Symbol canes are another option for you. Symbol canes are much smaller than Guide Canes and Long Canes, and alert other people nearby that you have visual impairment.

Also, canes with a red stripe can indicate the user has a hearing impairment, as well as visual impairment.

You can call us at Sight Scotland on 0800 024 8973 or Sight Scotland Veterans on 0800 035 6409 for advice.



# How we can help



## We can help you

- Understand your eye condition and the importance of treatment.
- Maintain independence and continue to do what you enjoy.

Contact Sight Scotland on 0800 024 8973 for support for all ages living with visual impairment.

Contact Sight Scotland Veterans on 0800 035 6409 if you are a veteran with vision loss, or you know a veteran with vision loss, for specialist support.

“

“We know sight loss can be scary, it can be isolating, and it can leave people feeling very low and upset. It is our job to show people what is still possible and to help them to start living their life again, one step at a time.”



Fiona, Sight Scotland Community Worker

”



## [sightscotland.org.uk](https://sightscotland.org.uk)

Sight Scotland is the operating name of Royal Blind, a Scottish charity No SC017167. Sight Scotland Veterans is the operating name of Scottish War Blinded, a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, charity number SC047192.