

HEALTH Eyegight

Linda Lusardi, 51, had previously been turned away by high-street laser surgeons as an “unsuitable” candidate, but 18 months ago she successfully had the operation and is delighted with the results.

“I was starting to need glasses to read as well as to drive,” she explains. “I went to see Professor Dan Reinstein and he said he could help me. I found the surgery a bit scary but over very quickly. I am pleased to say there was no pain at all and the recovery was very quick. My eyes are better now than when I was 16.”

Seeing is believing

Dan, a laser eye surgeon at the London Vision Clinic, also operated on Phillip Schofield and is a pioneer of treatments for ageing eyes and those with complicated prescriptions. He says: “No one could possibly prefer being dependent on glasses or contact lenses as it means there is something wrong with the body. The only thing

keeping people from having laser surgery on the eyes is fear – and knowledge dispels fear.”

One technique promoted by Prof. Reinstein is laser blended vision, which adjusts each eye differently for distance and near vision, and which he believes can significantly reduce the need for reading glasses or bifocals as the eye ages. He is one of the few doctors so far to offer such a treatment.

Laser surgery in general has had mixed reviews in the past, with reports of results that failed to live up to patients’ expectations, continuing problems with night vision after the operation and concerns over long-term safety.

Recent research, however, indicates that complications occur in fewer than five per cent of cases.

Meanwhile, many eye surgeons believe that for the first time there’s a very real possibility of delivering perfect sight to those who could never have dreamed of it before.

More and more of us are choosing laser surgery over glasses or contact lenses

I can see clearly now

Many stars can’t believe their eyes after laser vision correction surgery. But can we all look forward to a life without glasses?

Phillip Schofield has a whole new outlook on life these days – and it’s all thanks to vision correction surgery. After having the procedure (which he allowed to be filmed for *This Morning*), the popular presenter, a glasses wearer since the age of 15, could not quite believe his eyes.

“Done! Unbelievable, astonishing, painless and quite emotional,” he said. “I just sent my glasses to Africa!” And two weeks later, Phillip revealed to **HELLO!** just how much his life had changed. For the first time since childhood, he said, he could see clearly without the help of contact lenses or glasses and could read the autocue in the *This Morning* studio with ease.

Phillip is just one of around 100,000

people a year who opt to have their eyes lasered in the UK. And he’s far from the only famous face who has been able to say goodbye to glasses with the help of an ophthalmic surgeon. Nicole Kidman, Brad Pitt and Courteney Cox are all reported to have had the op, while Jessica Simpson and Kim Kardashian have, like Phillip, allowed their procedures to be filmed for their TV shows.

First carried out in the UK in the late 1980s, laser eye surgery is now so effective it can treat almost all vision problems – including, some believe, presbyopia or sight deterioration as a result of age.

THE LASER LOWDOWN

- Laser eye surgery can help correct myopia (short sightedness), hyperopia (long sightedness), astigmatism (distorted vision because of a misshapen eye surface) and, in some clinics, presbyopia (age-related vision). It involves reshaping the cornea using a laser and is done as an outpatient procedure.
- As the surgery is considered non-essential, it is not usually available on the NHS. However, some NHS hospitals will offer the treatment on a private basis.
- Finding the right surgeon for your type of procedure is crucial to success. The Royal College of Ophthalmologists guidelines say that only registered surgeons with specialist training should carry out laser surgery. For the full guidelines, visit the college website at rcophth.ac.uk. To find a consultant with specialist experience, visit drfoster.co.uk/Guides/ConsultantGuide.
- The website lasik-eyes.co.uk includes patient reviews to help you compare prices and procedures.
- To contact Professor Reinstein’s London Vision Clinic, visit londonvisionclinic.com. Prices start at £4,600 for surgery to both eyes, which can be paid in instalments.



Nicole Kidman (left) and Courteney Cox (right) are two of the celebrities who’ve tried the surgery