



Sunglasses do more than just make you look cool

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I have nothing in common with people who don't protect their eyes when they're out in the sun.

Secretly, I peer at them from behind my UV-blocking sunglasses, call them "Squinty McSquinterson" in my imagination, and wonder if their parents ever taught them about the importance of taking care of your eyes.

Canadian winters are very harsh on your eyes. Eyes take a lot of abuse daily, but when things near and far are covered with glistening snow and ice, and the sun beats down from cloudless skies in the middle of winter, they're under constant attack from the sun.

That's especially true for motorists, whose eyes are already busy scanning their surroundings, in addition to all that squinting to try to block out the bright light.

If you're driving with unprotected peepers on a bright winter day, you're giving your eyes a serious - and potentially damaging - workout.

"Good vision is essential for safe driving, especially in the winter when days are shorter and the sun seems brighter" says Dr. David Chisholm, an optometrist.

"Along with shorter days come longer nights, so more driving is done in the dark, too".

Here's where I state the obvious: wearing good quality sunglasses while you're driving during the day is an excellent idea. The key word is quality. We're not talking about that \$12 pair of sunglasses next to the cash register at your local plumbing store.

The right set of sunglasses will let you see more comfortably. You'll notice your eyes and the muscles surrounding them relaxing the instant you slide them on. Colours are fine-tuned to enhance faraway details with punched-up contrast and clarity.

Having polarized lenses is ideal, but not mandatory. They dramatically reduce reflections from non-metallic surfaces in your surroundings, cutting back on eye strain.

How do you choose the best sunglasses for driving? There are numerous options. Don't get too hung up on the brand.

Each of the sunglasses I chose to spend my own money on have their own unique pros and cons, and all of them make for a much more comfortable day at the wheel. So start by researching the styles you like online, and visit a local retailer to test-fit various options.

Next, investigate the lenses available. There's no hard standard here, but a driving lens typically uses a special colour tint (often brown or yellow) as well as coatings to reduce certain types of glare. Many of the best driving lenses are polarized, and others work to enhance or mute particular colours. If in doubt, ask a sales expert or chat with a representative at the company that makes the glasses.

Other valuable attributes are a thin set of arms, and having those arms mounted as high on the lens as possible, which both interfere less with your peripheral vision when doing lane-change checks.

Finally, look for glasses with rubber to soften where they sit on your face, especially around the nose and ears. This will make the sunglasses much more comfortable to wear for long periods.

Here are a few recommendations.

Best Overall: Maui Jim Sea House They're light, thin, extremely comfortable, and you'll forget you're even wearing them in about four seconds. Expect colours to explode, dull tones to be neutralized, and a dramatic increase in vision comfort. Polarization is included to further reduce glare. If the \$349 asking price is in your budget, these will prove to be worth every penny. **Great Value Pick:** Oakley Gauge 8M Starting at \$200, these Oakley shades hit all the right marks for a great driving companion, with thin arms, fluffy rubber nose grips, and an upgrade to polarized technology available from \$270. Lens and frame colour options are numerous for fine-tuning these to your chosen style. **Best On a Budget:** Duco Men's Sports Style Driver Glasses This set of Duco shades includes a wraparound lens design for maximum coverage, rubber nose grips for comfort, thin and high-mounted arms for optimal visibility, and polarized lenses. They're also under \$40. Affordable pricing and good owner reviews make this set worth a shot.

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