



Making Magic Goggles to Simulate Macular Degeneration

The following are instructions on how to create your own "magic goggles." These magic goggles are a tool for you to experience what it would be like to do daily activities if you had macular degeneration. Once you've made your own pair, try eating a meal, reading a book or walking around while wearing the glasses. Be very careful and be sure to have an adult help you while you try this activity.

Instructions for creating and using "magic goggles":

1. Obtain a pair of glasses that can be permanently altered. For example, a pair of cheap toy sunglasses is available at local stores where party favors are sold. Again, do not attempt this activity without adult supervision or guidance.
2. Put on the glasses, look straight ahead and have someone mark where the center of your vision falls. Place a thick dot of clear nail polish on the outside of the lenses, over the part that you will be looking through (make these areas very large - at least the size of a quarter, if not more). This central area must be large enough so that you don't have to work so hard to avoid "cheating" and looking around the blurred center vision. Remember, when you have macular degeneration, whenever you move your eyes, the spot will move and stay in the center of your vision.

3. When the nail polish has dried to the sticky stage, dab it with a facial tissue (don't let the tissue drag the polish all over the glass!). To simulate an early stage of macular degeneration, "one dab'll do ya," but to experience a more severe vision loss that can occur in later stages of macular degeneration, keep dabbing the nail polish with the tissue every minute or so until it is as darkened and dimmed as you want.
4. An alternative to using nail polish would be to cut two circles of black construction paper at least the diameter of a quarter and tape or glue them to the outside of the lenses. This isn't as "life-like" as the method that uses clear nail polish, but this would give you a rough approximation of what it would be like to experience day-to-day activities without being able to see straight ahead.
5. Another way to make your experience closer to "real life" would be to make one lens with more severe vision loss than the other. For example, one lens could have less tissue blotting or a smaller piece of construction paper.
6. If you wear prescription glasses, then either find a pair of goggles or glasses that you can modify that can be put over top of your glasses or do the activity without using your own glasses.
7. Share your experiences with your family, friends and classmates. What do you see through the glasses? Did you have any difficulty doing activities that you take for granted? How might it feel to see this way permanently?

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