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NEW EYEWEAR TAKES SHAPE

SIGHT FOR SORE EYES

Perfect vision all day, without lenses, lasers or glasses? We'll see, says **Tanya de Grunwald**

MY CONTACT lenses are always giving me grief. Glued to my laptop for nine hours a day, my eyes are dry, pink and sore by bedtime. Too vain for glasses and too squeamish for laser surgery, I assumed I was stuck with them.

Now there's an alternative: i-GO overnight corrective contact lenses. Insert before bed, remove in the morning and enjoy 20/20 vision all day. "Once the lenses are out, wearers can forget about them for the rest of the day," says Charles Babumba, of City Eyes Opticians. "If you work at a computer all day or want to play sport with greater confidence, they're ideal."

From £250 (plus £40 a month), they're cheaper than laser surgery, for which a top specialist can typically charge £4,000.

The risks? No greater than using normal contact lenses, insist the

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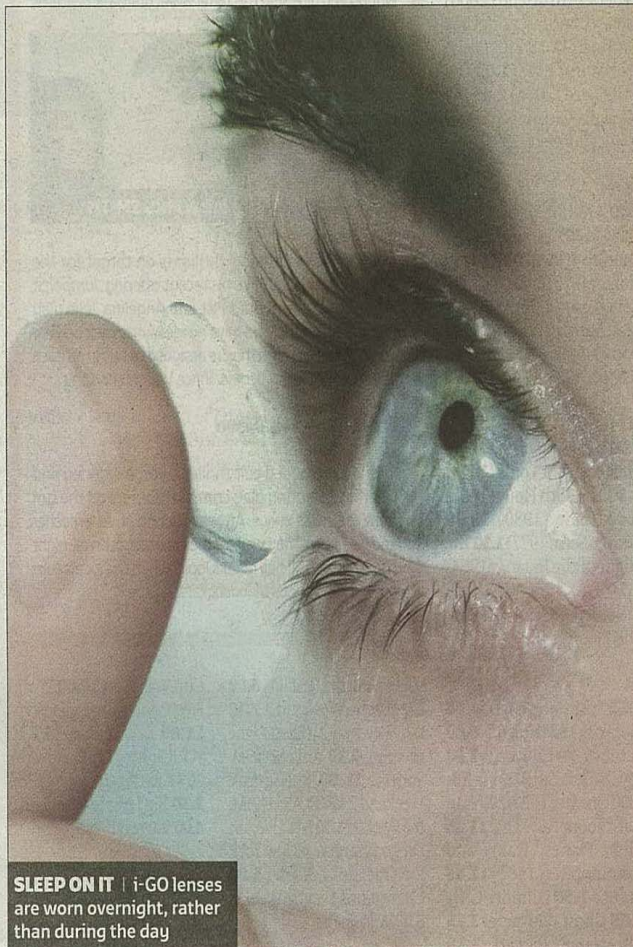
CHARLES BABUMBA

makers. That said, there is a note of caution from Dr Sarah Janikoun, president of the British Contact Lens Association: "There is still much more to be learnt about corneal-reshaping contact lenses and their effects on the eye. As with all contact lenses, it's important to follow the instructions carefully and attend regular check-ups."

So, does it really work? Yes. A week after Babumba examined my eyes in his City clinic, the bespoke lenses were flown in from the US. During the day

I could read street names, road signs and number plates, completely unaided. Impressive.

But adjusting wasn't fun. First, if you've never worn hard lenses before, they're mighty uncomfortable (flying saucer in your eye, anyone?). Plus, the insertion technique is a more painful "wedge and scoop" rather than a "slide and pinch". And if you think that sounds tricky sober, try it after the pub. Oh, and forget about reading in bed—once these bad boys are in, you'll want to go straight to sleep (merci-



SLEEP ON IT | i-GO lenses are worn overnight, rather than during the day

fully, the discomfort vanishes with closed eyes).

Second, expect dodgy vision in the early days. Prepare for "flare" (where halos surround lights and anyone wearing white) and "ghosting" (spooky imaginings in your peripheral vision).

And third, they mess up your day. Because the effects build over time, if you're as blind as I am (minus four in both eyes) you'll need weak

"top-up" lenses by mid-afternoon for the first week or so. Your bedroom will become a science lab—drops for this, solutions for that, mirrors, spare lenses.

Sadly, it was all too much—after seven days, I threw in the towel. The makers insist other patients love them, so what went wrong?

"Your prescription is high and you have considerable corneal astigmatism," says

the disappointed Babumba. "However, the lens design we came up with was doing the job—and your vision after your first night was better than I expected. The side effects are normal and would have settled down."

My advice? If you have a particular reason for looking into overnight lenses, go ahead. Me, I'm done. We just didn't see eye to eye.

www.igolenses.com

'CORRECTIVE LENSES TRANSFORMED MY LIFE'

Carima Andrad, 24, a scientific research assistant from Uxbridge, started wearing i-GO lenses in February.

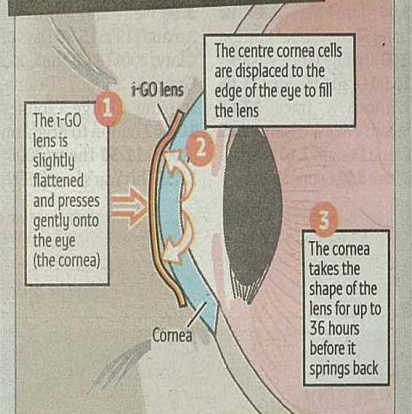
"For me, glasses were impractical at my aerobics class and soft lenses left my eyes dry in my air-conditioned office. Then a colleague told me about overnight corrective lenses. I loved them immediately and could see almost perfectly straight away. I've been short-sighted since I was 14 and I'm now minus 1.75 in one eye and minus two in the other. Waking up on the first morning and being able to see the clock on my bedroom wall was amazing! I didn't need top-up lenses, so the transition was straightforward.

The effects are so good that I can even miss a night of wearing them and still see fine the next day. After hiding behind glasses or fawning about inserting soft lenses after work, overnight lenses are a revelation."



DELIGHTED | i-GO convert Carima Andrad

the science bit



TANYA'S EYE EXAMINATION