

‘Eye-opening’ op gives Shirley new-found confidence



Keen golfer Shirley Baxter is setting her sights on new targets after a pioneering new procedure restored her vision.

The happy-go-lucky 50-year-old, who has suffered from poor eyesight for over three decades, is one of the first people in Suffolk to take advantage of a groundbreaking operation, which has brought her world back into bright, crisp and clear focus.

Revolutionary new implantable lenses have freed Shirley

from the shackles of spectacles and contact lenses and allowed her to focus on the finer details of life and improve her performance on the fairways.

“It’s like I’m living in a whole new world now,” says an ecstatic Shirley, who previously could barely function without the aid of her lenses or glasses.

“I’m now seeing things differently. Everything seems so much brighter, sharper and clearer. Before I would regularly lose sight of where my golf shots were landing but now I can stand on the first tee box and look down and actually see the flag!”

Shirley, who lives in Carlton Colville and runs her own residential home for the elderly, required glasses to see into the distance and read. Initially she tried having separate pairs to correct each problem but found the constant switching between pairs increasingly frustrating.

So about eight years ago she decided to opt for varifocals but unfortunately never got on with them.

She says: “My husband Gerard was always saying to me your glasses aren’t right as I could not see or read things properly. I found I was constantly moving them up and down the bridge of my nose to try and focus on things.

“When it used to come to putting on the golf course I found I would move my hand constantly up and down to get the right position with my glasses before I could even think about lining up the ball.”

She also had problems at work. “When I was on the computer I found I only had one hand on the keyboard and the other was constantly moving my glasses to try and see what I was doing. Every time I had to use the computer I would get a headache and a pain in my neck from constantly tilting my head up and down.

“If I picked up the telephone directory I would be unable to read the number as I never seemed to be able to find a pair of glasses that allowed me to see perfectly.”

And contact lenses didn’t offer a satisfactory solution either. She says: “I tried and I tried but I couldn’t get on with them. They were very unpredictable as sometimes they would become very dry and make my eyes quite sore. If I put them in to play golf, half way round I’d feel like I needed to take them out again because I couldn’t see the ball or play properly.”

Out of desperation she started searching for an alternative solution. Shirley initially wondered whether laser eye surgery could provide the answer after witnessing the remarkable results of various friends’ treatments.

However, a consultation with highly respected consultant ophthalmologist Sam Kasaby revealed laser surgery, which has proved popular among a number of professional golfers, would only correct her distance vision leaving her still reliant on glasses to read. Instead he recommended a pioneering new intraocular lens (IOL) — the AcrySof® ReSTOR® — to replace her existing natural lens.

Manufactured by one of the world’s leading eye care companies Alcon, the unique patented design of the ReSTOR enables clear vision at all distances — significantly reducing or eliminating a patient’s dependence on glasses.

“It was amazing, I noticed a difference straight away,” says Shirley.

“Afterwards the clock on the waiting room wall started to come into focus and I was really excited. I would never have been able to see it before! Each day it just got better and better and within a week I was reading the smallest print.”

And Shirley never tires of her fresh outlook. She says: “I’m still looking around and being amazed by things. I find myself thinking things like ‘has the grass always been that colour?’ I suppose as my eyesight had deteriorated colours had started to fade.”

The new procedure is performed under local anaesthetic and typically takes around 15 minutes per eye — depending on the complexity of the case.

Mr Kasaby explains: "During the operation a micro-incision is made at the edge of the cornea. A tiny probe is inserted into the eye and the existing lens is gently broken down by ultra sound and removed.

"The ReSTOR lens is then folded and inserted through the tiny incision. Once in place the lens unfolds into the correct position. As the incision is so small, stitches are rarely required. Patients can then return home the same day and look forward to a rapid and pain-free recovery.

"It was quite staggering," says Shirley. "It's such a small operation but it makes such a difference to your life. It's lovely being able to get straight up in the morning without having to fumble around for my glasses. Before I would even put my glasses on just to go downstairs and make a cup of coffee. It's also nice to be free to go swimming or horse riding and not have to give my vision a second thought."

She is also convinced that the procedure has given her more confidence. "I feel so much better about myself. I like wearing make up more as I'm no longer hiding behind a pair of glasses."

She adds: "I would definitely recommend the treatment. The whole thing has been a wonderful experience. I have been completely amazed by it all. I keep telling my husband who wears glasses that he should really have it done."

Mr Kasaby believes the ReSTOR is able to offer fresh hope to a whole new group of people suffering from poor eyesight. He says: "It's wonderful to be in a position to offer people like Shirley, who may not fully benefit from other procedures such as laser eye surgery, a genuine alternative. The ReSTOR really is quite an exciting breakthrough."

To find out more about the lens please contact Lasersight on telephone number 01702 608 900.