

My Experience with Bioptics

By Glen Bracegirdle 2019



I thought I would share my experience using bioptics in Australia over the past 3 to 4 years, but first a little background on myself. I am in my 30's and have Albinism. My vision currently measures about 6/120 and I also have bad nystagmus (for which I have had surgery with some success). I have used a monocular my whole school life and most of my study through TAFE (Advanced Diploma in Accounting) and University (Bachelor in Accounting).

I have never let my vision stop me from doing what I want and have travelled extensively through the US, Canada and around Australia. I worked for just over 9 years for a Transport Company doing everything from Credit Control, Data Entry and Customer Service to Reception.

I work as a volunteer at Vision Australia in ATT Assistance (Adaptive Technology Trainer Assistant), am a member of the AFA (Albinism Fellowship of Australia) and a committee member for Swish Victoria (Swish is Table Tennis for the blind). I enjoy physical activity and keeping fit, having played or tried various sports including Blind Cricket, Swish, Goal Ball, Blind Football, Blind Tennis, Tandem Bike Riding, Bike Riding, plus many more. I currently walk between 7 and 10km a day and go to the gym regularly.

So what is a bioptic? A bioptic is a small telescope or binoculars, attached to a special glasses frame, so the person using them does not need to hold them. To look through the bioptic a person simply looks up through the telescope, adjusting the focus to see either distance or something up close, such as a computer screen or something on a desk.



At left is Junior AFA member, Konna, trying a bioptic at an AFA Vic get together in 2015.

To find out more about Bioptics visit <http://www.emlowvision.com.au/ocutech-bioptics> or <http://www.ocutech.com>

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The bioptic I use is a 6x Ocutech VES Sport. Although it is not something that I wear around the house everyday or use every time I go out, I would certainly be lost without it.

Some of the examples of how I use the Bioptic are:

1. **Travelling.** When travelling through airports, train stations or even looking for bus stops, it enables me to read signs and timetables. I can check what number bus is coming, even find landmarks to help guide me along my way, all the while having both hands free to carry bags, use my white cane or guide dog, or even use my phone.
2. **Study** at school, TAFE, University or even conferences. It is nice to be able to turn up and not have to ask someone to move, so that I can sit in the front row and be able to see. It is especially advantageous at large university lectures or conferences as it enables me to sit and take notes, with both hands free to type. I am able to see the presenter and any PowerPoint presentations or Videos being displayed on the big screens around the room.
3. **Sporting Events.** To go to football, tennis, cricket or whatever sport I want, to sit up in the stands where I am able to follow the action on the field, is great! There is no need to worry about my arm getting tired holding the monocular.
4. **Live Shows or concerts.** To go and see my favorite band or a live show and actually be able to see what is happening on the stage is a great feeling.
5. **Restaurants.** I am able to go out to a meal with friends and not only read the menu on the table in front of me, but also the specials board on the wall.
6. **In the Office** I am able to read the labels on files in a filing cabinet. Having my hands free to flick through files, put in or take out paperwork, is so helpful and I can even just look up and see if a co-worker is at their desk.
7. **I use it in IT Support,** so that I can stand behind someone at their desk and see the computer screen, while I guide them through things without getting in the way.

These are only a few of the ways I use my bioptic, but I know there are many people out there who use them in all sorts of different ways.