

Save your eyes with Sapphire Eyewear

Sapphire Eyewear was started last year when Seamus Flynn and Dearbhaile Collins were on their honeymoon and decided to abandon all technology.

Honeymoons are predominantly a time for relaxation and switching off, but for optician Seamus Flynn and consultant oncologist Dr Dearbhaile Collins, it was the start of a business.

The couple honeymooned in Zambia in October of last year, and opted to abandon all technology and switch off from the world.

It then became apparent that Dearbhaile, who had suffered from eyestrain and headaches prior to the trip, had issues with digital eyestrain caused from using her phone and other devices, as her problems disappeared after leaving her technology behind.

“It was obvious that Dearbhaile was suffering from digital eyestrain,” said Seamus Flynn, co-founder of [Sapphire Eyewear](#). “We were also shocked to discover that there was a major problem getting access to basic eyewear and even getting eye exams, so we set out to design a range of eyewear to combat digital eye strain by blocking blue light.”

Blue light from digital screens causes symptoms of eyestrain, tired eyes and can disrupt a person’s sleep pattern. Seamus claims that this is a problem for people all over the world, and one that he intends to solve.

“A lot of the blue light glasses on the market were of poor quality both in terms of the frames and the lenses used, and many of them had orange tinted lenses.

“We set out to create a luxury brand of eyewear at an affordable price, using the highest-grade cellulose and Italian Mazzichelli materials as well as lenses with high performance optics that block blue light and improve contrast.

“We also have blue light transition lenses which uses technology to allow the lenses to be clear indoors with the blue light filter and when the UV from the sun hits the lenses outdoors, they turn into sunglasses, so they are dual use,” he added.

The company’s core products are the blue light glasses and the transition glasses. The blue light glasses have lenses that incorporate multiple reflective layers that both reflect and absorb wavelengths of light in the blue light spectrum.



The transition lenses have molecules of silver chloride embedded in the lens when exposed to

ultraviolet (UV) rays as in direct sunlight, undergo a chemical process that causes them to change shape and absorb a significant percentage of the visible light, causing them to darken to a sunglasses tint.

Inspired by where the idea came from, for every pair of glasses sold, Sapphire Eyewear donate a pair of glasses to people in developing countries.

“I always had an entrepreneurial side and one thing I always wanted to do was to be able to give back in some way to those less fortunate. When in Zambia, we were shocked to discover that access to eye testing and to basic eyewear was very difficult, so when we set up, we decided to donate a pair of glasses to those in need of eyewear in developing countries.”

Unlike many Irish businesses over the last three months, Sapphire Eyewear saw sales skyrocket, which Seamus says is down to people spending more time on their devices.

“We have tripled our sales since the lockdown and have maintained double our usual sales level with the easing of restrictions.

“This is due to an increase in the number of people suffering digital eyestrain because they are spending more time on digital devices. We have also seen an increase in our sunglasses and transition glasses sales due to the nice weather,” he continued.

Seamus says it is extremely important to protect your eyes from the “harmful” blue light from screens, especially if you spend an hour or more a day on a digital device.

“Eyestrain, tired eyes and headaches are all common symptoms, but blue light also reduces the body’s production of melatonin, a sleep hormone, which causes disruption in sleep patterns, especially if you are on your phone or tablet just before you go to bed.

“Kids eyes are even more important to protect as they don't have a mature crystalline lens that can absorb some of the blue light.”

Looking to the future, Seamus has set his sights on solidifying the company's position in the Irish and UK market, but already has one eye on the US and Canadian markets.

Offering advice to aspiring entrepreneurs, Seamus claims the secret to success starts with a strong work ethic.

“My advice to fellow founders is to develop a strong work ethic and set monthly or even weekly goals early on to make sure you are driving your business on as much as possible. I would also strongly recommend making contact with your Local Enterprise Office to discuss the range of supports that are available,” he finished.

For more information on Sapphire Eyewear or to order a pair of glasses to protect your eyes from blue light, [click here](#).

By Stephen Larkin

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