

This is long but there are a few people that wanted my thoughts after completing my Light Adjustable Lens (LAL) replacement. I had mild cataracts, but enough that medicare approved lens replacements. Once you have that approval a surgeon will give you the prices for different levels/types of lens. My facility called them Option 1-4, which corresponded to price and I suppose level of satisfaction gained. I had decided on level 3 which was a top of the line standard lens, costing \$3200 per eye. Expected outcome would be much better vision but would still need readers for most up close work. Options 1-3 were a one day per eye procedure, and you are done.

I was told about option 4 after the surgeon talked to me a bit. They don't have it in much of their literature as there are a few requirements for someone to be a candidate and it is pretty new technology. Your eyes must be capable to dilate to a certain level. You must be willing to wear UV glasses for a few months outside. You have to be able to travel to your appointments for adjustments, which can take about 2 hours each time. It is an ideal solution for someone that has previously had lasik, which I had about 14 years ago. Of course it is more expensive, \$4100 per eye.

After agreeing to get the LAL done, I had my first lens put in my right eye the first week of March, following with my left eye a week later. From the very beginning, I had a very annoying blur in my left eye, but no one seemed very concerned. It was like having a bad smear on your glasses and was worse in bright light, watching TV and driving.

The surgery getting the lens replaced is not painful at all and really is the least of the entire process. After a couple of weeks the adjustments start. Biggest thing I can advise on this is expect long appointments and you will have to have a driver. It is doubtful a person that is working would be able to get enough time off to complete this process. Our drive was about 1 ½ hours one way and we made many trips, meaning the driver had to sit and wait 2-3 hours. This was the most frustrating thing of all, besides the "blur".

Adjustments are nothing at all, they take a minute or so after an exam and dilation. You get a few numbing drops and then they stick this cap over your eye with tons of weird gooey stuff and you look into a machine that shoots a computerized amount of UV light into the lens. There are little "things" floating inside the silicone lens that grab onto each other based on your eyesight goal and after each adjustment on an eye, you get closer to your goal. I had 2 adjustments on each eye. With total trust in my surgeon he worked with me each stage on what I wanted to obtain. I wanted perfect up close, but was willing to wear readers for very, very detailed work. I told him I would be willing to lose some of my distance vision to obtain this goal. He stated that everyone says that and then regrets it later. I have lost a tiny bit of my distance and I totally agree with him, I am glad he did not let me give up more as mine is not crystal clear any longer. But I got better than I asked for up close so it worked out.

Back to the "blur". I had two YAG procedures, don't ask me what it stands for. One out of four people have an area behind their lens that is irregular. It was probably always there but I did not realize it until I had a clear new lens put in my left eye. The YAG is a quick laser that breaks up the spot. After the second one it is much better but there is still a bit left and I expect in a few months he will do it one more time. This is my only real disappointment out of the whole thing and it is not due to the fault of the lens itself.

After you obtain the vision you want, there are two lock in treatments, a week apart. They are the same as the adjustments, but about 2 minutes each. Twenty four hours after your last lock in there is no longer a requirement to wear the glasses and you can go on about life with new eyes.

Main points:

Have trust in your surgeon or don't do it, it is a teamwork thing.

It is expensive, \$8200 is about the national average.

It is new technology so ask how many your surgeon has done, I was the 97<sup>th</sup> for my Dr.

Seriously consider the time commitment.

Wear your glasses religiously. You cannot let UV light get to your eyes until after the lock in.

Make sure you have a person that will drive you as many times as needed and they can wait. Bill drove me to all my appointments but one. It was more of a commitment to his time than my own I believe, as I just closed my eyes the entire way home and did not have to deal with the traffic.

My vision life today? I can read anything, phone, kindle, laptop with wonderful 20/20 vision. Turned out I don't even need readers for very close work while quilting. I lost a tiny bit of distance, but I was forewarned and can live with it. I still want the "blur" completely gone, but I will have to wait a bit for that. Overall, I am glad I did it and would do it again.

Feel free to contact me with any questions if you or a family member is thinking about doing the LAL. I also will provide my surgeon's name if interested.