



Comparing your laser eye surgery options

This is a general guide to the various types of laser eye surgery available – the end visual result is the same for all three procedures.

	PRK (also called ASLA and transPRK)	LASIK	SMILE*/SMILE PRO
Age range	18–55	18–55	18–55
Approved for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-sightedness Short-sightedness Astigmatism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-sightedness Short-sightedness Astigmatism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-sightedness Short-sightedness Astigmatism
Prescription range	+2 to -8 (stable for 12 months)	+4 to -10 (stable for 12 months)	-1.5 to +5.00 (stable for 12 months)
Invasiveness	Relatively non-invasive surface treatment	Requires creation of a corneal flap	Requires lasered corneal lenticule to be removed
Discomfort during healing	Mild/moderate in early healing	Very little	Very little
Initial visual recovery (return to normal activities)	Slower than LASIK and SMILE (at least 1 week of downtime)	Very quick (usually overnight)	Very similar to LASIK (sometimes slightly slower in first few days)
Complete visual stabilisation	6–12 months	3–6 months	3–6 months
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No corneal flap Suitable for thinner or irregular corneas 'No touch' transPRK most commonly used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fastest initial visual recovery Quick return to normal activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No corneal flap More suitable than LASIK for higher refractive errors and drier eyes Fastest return to contact sports (around day 5)
Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slowest recovery of all procedures At least 1 week before return to driving/work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not suitable for thin or steep corneas or chronic dry eyes At least 1-month wait to resume contact sports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not suitable for mild myopia below -1.50

An initial assessment is required to determine which is the most appropriate procedure for you. This involves comprehensive testing and measurement of your eyes, as well as an in-depth discussion with a vision correction surgeon about your visual goals and lifestyle considerations, realistic visual outcome, potential risks, recovery period and costs.

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References 1. Lawless M. Refractive Laser Surgery: Who's Interested Now? *mivision* 2019;141:33–37. 2. <https://visioneyeinstitute.com.au/services/laser-eye-surgery/> (accessed online Apr 2023).

Book a laser consultation at: visioneyeinstitute.com.au/services/laser-eye-surgery

