

Lens cloths and sprays are not window display material. No passer by is likely to be enticed into a practice by the sight of an A2 poster showing a close up of a microfibre cloth rather than a Ray-Ban display. Yet these accessory items can make a big difference if the advantages of quality products are made clear or if they are utilised in a marketing strategy. Several suppliers in the UK have products and ideas on both these approaches.

'The quality of different samples of microfibre cloth can be compared in a number of ways,' says Peter Wood, managing director of Caseco. 'Cheaper cloths tend to be lighter in weight and are frequently stretchier. A lighter weight cloth will have less microfibre content and hence less cleaning ability overall. A heavier grade of cloth has more microfibrils so the cloth possesses the capacity to maintain its cleaning power longer.'

This variation in the quality of cloth offered causes a confusing diversity of prices too, which is something that Caseco sales director Jules Clarke sees regularly.

'It really depends on what you want your patients to think about you and your practice, as they use the cloth you provide them with. Most of our customers prefer to offer a more sumptuous cloth, often in exciting unusual colours, that cleans well, and is well branded to give their patients the desired impression of their practice.'

Bespoke offering

Caseco provides a variety of bespoke options, including four-colour images and photographic prints, and packs which can be integrated with a bespoke scheme for the practice. The company also offers a range of picture cloths for retail use, a range of microfibre bags and branded lens spray bottles and cans.

Calotherm has been supplying cleaning accessories worldwide since 1934 and its modern microfibre products benefit from innovations in the manufacturing process.

'The manufacturing process



Cleaning up

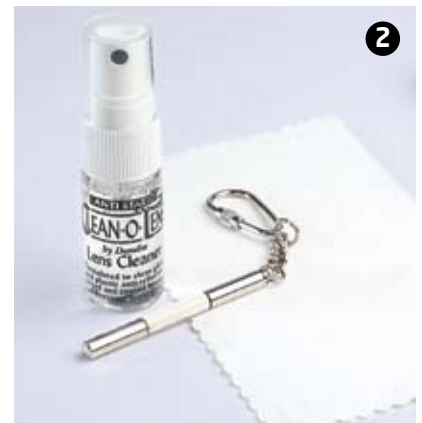
Optician rounds up the various lens cloths and sprays on the market

achieves a greater concentration of fibres per area,' says Patrick Ensor, sales and marketing director of Calotherm. 'The cloth is made on much wider rolls than any other cloths and is then heat treated in order to shrink the rolls, thus increasing the fibre concentration. The microfibre cloth is then treated with a chemical to split the fibres, which results in air pockets being created between each of the fibres.'

The principle behind these processes is that a greater concentration of fibres means a cloth has a greater surface in contact with the surface to be cleaned. Also the split, finer fibres increase the surface area still further as well as enabling more effective cleaning of hard-to-reach areas of a lens. Furthermore the air pockets hold dirt and grease away from the cleaned surface, allowing the cloth

to remain effective even after several applications.

'The strict production process produces a very durable product that will not fray and can be washed many times before a replacement is required,' says Ensor. 'The cloths





1 Examples of products from Caseco 2 Dunelm
3 Dibble Optical 4 Pennine Optical 5 MGF Optical
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are also effective for applications beyond spectacle lens cleaning, with smart phone touch screens the latest example to come to the fore. '

In addition to the lens cloth, Calotherm offers three different types of spray, all of which work on a pump-action mechanism. The Caloclean formula provides an antistatic guard without the use of any alcohols or solvents and is specifically designed for delicate rimless glasses. Caloclear is an anti-fogging formulation to provide an anti-static and anti-mist guard while thoroughly removing dirt and smears. Finally the Calocoat brand is used primarily for coated and polycarbonate lenses and is recommended for stubborn residue build-up.

Dibble Optical, the Kent-based independent supplier of ophthalmic consumables, devotes a whole chapter of its catalogue to its cleaning cloths and lens care range.

Both the Optilux premium quality and Optisoft Easy standard quality microfibre cloths are available in three sizes and seven popular colours, with an optional screen printing or relief embossed printing service available. Dibble also offers a photo printing option.



The company also carries a range of four lens cleaning spray products. The interestingly-named Bonklar Soft antistatic spray is designed for cleaning polycarbonate lenses, while the Bonklar Classic spray can be used for all lens types. Bonklar Nano employs nanotechnology to help prevent fogging and is suitable for all coated plastic and glass lenses, while SpexSpray is designed for the removal of progressive lens markings or general lab use.

Dunelm has four types of lens cleaning options available to opticians – a combination cleaning kit, an anti-fog lens cleaner and cloth, and the lens cleaner in a 240ml unit and cloth as separate items. It offers optional branded microfibre cleaning cloths in seven different colours, as well as

unnamed cloths in three different colours.

Crescent Lens Cleaners has been producing and supplying case cloths in the UK since it was established in 1964.

'Our clients are mainly, but not exclusively, independent opticians,' says Matt Cutting, director of Crescent Lens Cleaners. 'As a UK company it is obviously difficult to be cheaper than our competitors with factories in the Far-East, so our aim, therefore, is to provide high quality optical cleaning cloths within 10 working days.'

The company offers a range of microfibre and cotton twill cloths in a variety of colours and sizes, printed or unprinted. It also supplies personalised or plain walleted cloths as well as lens cleaning solutions.

Hilco's products in the cleaning sphere include multi product lens care kits, liquid lens cleaners including anti-fog and anti-smudge formulations, pre-moistened lens cleaner wipes and microfibre lens cloths.

MGF Optical has been in operation since 1993 and suggests bundling microfibre cloths with other products to increase profit margins.

Pennine Optical has recently launched the Mirage lens cleaning product collection. The Mirage cleaner is a anti-fog, anti-static coating spray suitable for all types of coated lenses, available in three sizes and can be personalised for individual practices for a small charge. ●

