



RLE in Northern Colorado: Ditching Reading Glasses After 45

October 08, 2026

LOVELAND, CO - October 08, 2026 -

Patients across Northern Colorado who have been told they are past the window for laser vision correction often assume their options have run out. In many cases they have not. Refractive lens exchange, or RLE, is a vision correction procedure that removes the eye's natural lens and replaces it with an advanced artificial lens implant, and for adults over 40, it frequently addresses the exact vision change that LASIK cannot. Vance Thompson Vision ? Northern Colorado, led by board-certified ophthalmologist Cullen Ryburn, MD, is expanding patient education around refractive lens exchange for patients in Loveland, Fort Collins, Greeley, Longmont, and Windsor.

Age alone does not disqualify someone from LASIK. What changes after 40 is the natural lens itself, which gradually loses its ability to shift focus up close, a normal age-related change called presbyopia. LASIK reshapes the cornea, so it does not treat a lens that has stopped focusing. RLE works on the lens directly, which is why patients who are frustrated by reading glasses, bifocals, or a growing stack of drugstore readers are often better candidates for lens-based correction than for a corneal procedure. The more useful question is not whether a patient is too old for LASIK, but which procedure matches how the eye has actually changed.

The most common point of confusion is how RLE differs from cataract surgery. Surgically, the two are close relatives: the same core technique, the same category of lens implants, roughly 15 minutes per eye as an outpatient procedure. The difference is timing and what is being removed. Cataract surgery removes a natural lens that has already clouded and is interfering with daily vision. RLE replaces a clear lens that has simply lost focusing range, typically well before a cataract forms. One treats a diagnosed condition; the other is elective, made on the patient's timeline.

That timing distinction leads directly to a question patients ask constantly: does RLE mean cataracts are off the table for good? Because cataracts form in the eye's natural lens, and RLE removes that lens and replaces it with an artificial implant, a cataract will not develop in a treated eye afterward. Patients who have RLE are not scheduling cataract surgery in that eye later in life. For adults weighing the procedure in their late 40s or 50s, consolidating two future decisions into one is often part of the calculation.

Which implant goes in is the choice that shapes the result. Multifocal and trifocal lenses use several focal points within a single implant to support distance, intermediate, and near vision, with the tradeoff that some patients notice halos at night. Extended depth of focus lenses prioritize a broad, continuous range weighted toward distance and computer work, with less glare risk, though many patients still reach for readers on fine print. The Light Adjustable Lens can be fine-tuned after the eye heals through a series of light treatments, letting patients experience their vision before the prescription is finalized. Astigmatism-correcting designs are available across several of these options. No lens eliminates the need for glasses in every situation, and comparing those tradeoffs honestly is the substance of a real consultation.

Dr. Ryburn completed his fellowship in cornea, external diseases, and refractive surgery at the University of Miami's Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, ranked the nation's No. 1 ophthalmology program by U.S. News & World Report, following residency training at the University of Colorado. A member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery, he practices across cataract surgery, cornea, glaucoma, and refractive surgery rather than a single procedure line.

"Being fellowship-trained in cornea and refractive surgery means I can offer the full spectrum of vision correction, from LASIK and PRK to lens-based procedures like RLE," said Cullen Ryburn, MD, board-certified ophthalmologist at Vance Thompson Vision. "When someone comes in convinced they've missed their window, my job is to look at what their eyes are actually doing and recommend the procedure that's truly best for them, not the one they walked in asking about."

Vance Thompson Vision has performed more than 80,000 procedures across its network, with nearly 100 years of combined surgical experience. The Northern Colorado practice serves patients throughout the Front

Range from its office in Loveland, Colorado. Consultations include a full evaluation of eye health, prescription history, and visual goals to determine whether RLE is appropriate.

###

For more information about Vance Thompson Vision - Northern Colorado, contact the company here: Vance Thompson Vision - Northern Colorado Vance Thompson Vision 970-775-5453 info@vancethompsonvision.com 2975 Ginnala Dr STE 120, Loveland, CO 80538

Vance Thompson Vision - Northern Colorado

Vance Thompson Vision are world leaders in quality vision correction and patient care in ophthalmology. We specialize in vision surgery and treatment with a specific focus on LASIK, refractive cataract surgery, glaucoma, cornea care, and oculoplastics.

Website: <https://www.vancethompsonvision.com/locations/northern-colorado>

Email: info@vancethompsonvision.com

Phone: 970-775-5453

