

## Type size

According to the „Guideline on the Readability of the Labelling and Package Leaflet of Medicinal Products for Human Use“, 12 January 2009 requires minimum size:

The type size should be as large as possible to aid readers. A type size of 9 points, as measured in font 'Times New Roman', not narrowed, with a space between lines of at least 3 mm, should be considered as a minimum. However, for marketing authorisation applications until 1 February 2011, a type size of 8 points, as measured in font 'Times New Roman', not narrowed, with a space between lines of at least 3 mm, should be acceptable as absolute minimum.

The Guideline gives other useful advice, however, type size is just one of a number of typography metrics that determine readability. Therefore is-design has collected an overview of the main aspects of type readability and gives a comparison of different typefaces.

### Size is not everything

It can be quite easily the case that an 8 point size of one typeface is as legible as a 9 point size of another.

Other main determinants for the legibility of a typeface are:

- relative difference in size between lower case (x-height) and capital letters (cap-height)
- length of ascenders and descenders
- clear, even letter spacing
- clear, even word spacing
- „counters“ that remain legible at small size
- short, strong serifs that don't disappear at small size or interfere with each other

Frutiger

Typeface ij l1 3689

ascender  
cap-height  
x-height  
baseline  
descender

Times Roman

Typeface ij l1 3689

Counters  
Serifs

Arial

Typeface ij l1 3689

Typeface

word spacing  
letter spacing  
line spacing (leading)

## Comparison

This page demonstrates the visual appearance of a few major typefaces in comparison with Times New Roman.

### Actual size difference vs. identical type size:

Times New Roman, cap height = 10

Your doctor has prescribed

Futura Book, cap height = 10,068

Your doctor has prescribed

Helvetica Neue Roman cap height = 10,727

Your doctor has prescribed

Frutiger Roman cap height = 10,5

Your doctor has prescribed

### Visual appearance at identical cap-height (10 mm):

Times Roman, lower case height = 6,88 mm

Your doctor has prescribed

Futura Book, lower case height = 6,35 mm

Your doctor has prescribed

Helvetica Neue Roman, lower case height = 7,27 mm

Your doctor has prescribed

Helvetica Neue Roman, lower case height = 7,27 mm

Your doctor has prescribed

### Similar readability at different sizes:

Times Roman 9 pt: Your doctor has prescribed

Futura Book 9 pt: Your doctor has prescribed

Helvetica Roman 8pt: Your doctor has prescribed

Frutiger Roman 8pt: Your doctor has prescribed