



Time, practice & experience

*Getting the most out of
your new hearing aids*

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Slow and steady wins the race

Unlike eyeglasses, which give you immediate, positive results the moment you put them on, hearing aids typically require a short transition period. How they sound, how they feel, even getting in the routine of wearing them every day takes practice.

With time, patience and experience, you'll come to understand all the benefits these powerful "mini computers" can have on your life.



The power of positive hearing

Effort and a positive attitude are critical to improving hearing. Much of the success with your hearing aids will depend on your desire to learn and determination to increase your ability to hear. To achieve better hearing, you must work at it daily. The ability to hear again has to be relearned, not just purchased.

Hearing and understanding involve more than just your ears

Because you haven't heard normal sounds and noises for a while, the sounds amplified by your hearing aids may be strange: tinny, metallic, artificial and unnatural. This is because you are hearing the high-frequency speech sounds like "s", "f" and "t" that you have been missing or have heard differently for years.

Your brain will need to become reacquainted with the high-frequency sounds of speech and environmental sounds you've been missing. When you begin using hearing aids, it may take four to six weeks to transition to the new sounds you're hearing.



Hear better, faster

One discipline common to almost everyone who successfully makes the transition to hearing aids is practice. It is an investment that will require time. However, you'll soon be able to go on with your life without thinking about your hearing.

There are activities and exercises specifically designed to help with personal hearing training. By following the weekly assignments recommended by your hearing professional and you can speed up the adjustment and help ensure long-lasting listening performance and comfort.

Set realistic goals

- Don't get discouraged or give up! It often takes up to a month to get comfortable wearing your new hearing aids.
- It's important to know that hearing aids will not let you hear like you did with normal hearing. Focus on your improvement, not on those negative times when your hearing aids don't let you hear what you want to hear. The function of your hearing aids is to help you hear better, not perfectly.
- You can expect to take them in to your hearing professional at least once or twice the first month to get fine-tuned to your needs. A little trial and error is to be expected.
- The "tinny" or mechanical sounds you hear are normal. These are the soft, high-frequency sounds you have been missing. Be patient while your brain gets reacquainted with these sounds.
- At first, your voice may sound strange to you. Some wearers say that in the beginning, they sound like they are in a barrel. In time, your voice will sound more natural.
- Background noise is normal. Normal hearing individuals hear it too. Don't give up on hearing aids because noise bothers you. Better hearing will require you to put up with a few inconveniences.

Assignments

Week 1

- ☐ Choose a quiet environment to begin using your hearing aids. You might not want to wear your new hearing aids in crowded or noisy environments until you have adjusted to them in your own home.
- ☐ Listen carefully to the many forgotten sounds in your home, like the refrigerator, furnace, or the sound of turning the pages of a book or magazine. You will get used to hearing them again.
- ☐ Practice having a conversation with your spouse or loved one. Make sure your television and radio are turned off. Facing each other, sit no more than seven feet apart. Practice looking at the speaker's mouth. Remember, much of communication is visual.
- ☐ Practice reading out loud. You will slowly adjust to the loudness of your speech while wearing your hearing aids. It is normal at first for your voice to sound different. Don't worry; soon it will sound familiar again.
- ☐ If you become fatigued, remove your hearing aids and take a break. After a couple of hours, put them back in.

Week 2

- ☐ Gradually increase the time you spend wearing your hearing aids by wearing them in your car, at the grocery store, and when you run errands. By learning to wear your hearing aids in your daily routine, your brain will soon “tune out” the normal noises you initially may find irritating.
- ☐ Wear your hearing aids while listening to the television (which is more difficult than it seems). Practicing watching television will make other difficult listening situations easier.
- ☐ Practice increasing the distance between you and whoever is speaking without adjusting the volume of your hearing aids.
- ☐ Participate in conversations with two other people at a time in quiet surroundings. Don't worry if you can't understand both of them. Try focusing on one at a time. Remember, even a normal hearing individual has trouble understanding when several people are talking at the same time.
- ☐ If you become fatigued, take your hearing aids out for a while, but always put them back in. Do not give up. Like learning a sport or playing a musical instrument — becoming proficient requires daily practice.

Assignments

Week 3

- ☐ If you haven't already, wear your hearing aids in louder, more crowded places and for longer periods of time. Wear them to work, worship, parties, meetings, sporting events and restaurants. These are difficult environments, so you will need to be patient and begin learning some skills to improve your listening situation.
- ☐ In listening environments with background noise, concentrate on the speaker. Over time, your brain will subconsciously categorize sounds and will tune out background noise and focus on the speaker.
- ☐ And remember, there will be situations where it's difficult to hear even for normal hearing individuals.

Take care of your hearing aids, and they'll take care of you

Here are some tips to help you get years and years of performance and comfort from your hearing aids.

Clean Your Hearing Aids

Remove Earwax – Use the cleaning tools provided with your new hearing aids and follow the manufacturer's instructions.

When you remove your hearing aids at night, wipe them with a dry, soft cloth. Do not use alcohol swabs or cleaning solvents on your hearing aids as that can break down the hearing aid material.

Don't drop your Hearing Aids

When you are learning how to correctly place and remove your hearing aids, do it from a seated position with a towel or pillow in your lap.

Proper storage

When not in use, keep your hearing aids away from heat and moisture and store them in your Dry Caddy or in a cool, dry place. Leave the battery door open to preserve battery power when not in use.

When not to wear your hearing aids

While some new hearing aids today are designed to be water resistant, don't wear your hearing aids...

- In the shower or sauna
- Swimming
- When using a hair dryer
- Until you have applied hair products or other spray



Better hearing will depend on:

1. Your commitment to make your hearing aids work in your everyday routine
2. Time spent wearing your hearing aids to become comfortable using them in different environments
3. Your patience while your brain adjusts to unfamiliar sounds
4. Managing your own environment by learning what situations you can control and what situations to avoid

You're on your way

There's no doubt hearing aids are a significant investment in terms of time and money. But what you're about to get in return has the potential to be priceless:

- Feeling safe and more secure
- Feeling less isolated
- Being more engaged with family and friends
- Enjoying music and TV to the fullest
- Feeling more aware and confident
- Communicating more easily
- Feeling less reliant on others
- Improving your overall quality of life

***Enjoy your new hearing aids.
You are well on your way to better hearing!***

Notes



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