



*Your Journey to*

# BETTER HEARING

A guide to living a healthy hearing life

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Hearing is one of the human body's most remarkable senses. It integrates seamlessly with our brains to help us connect with the world around us. Made up of a complex system of delicate and synchronous parts, it's easy to take this vital sense for granted.

If any of these components aren't working properly, the result could be hearing loss. For 48 million Americans—or nearly one in five ages 12 and older—this is precisely the case (Lin, Niparko, & Ferrucci, 2011).

If you are one of those 48 million Americans with hearing loss, or know someone who could use help, this Better Hearing Guide is for you.

In it, you'll find out just how common hearing loss is, how help is more advanced and available than ever before, and the steps you can take to ensure hearing loss doesn't get in the way of a healthy and happy life.

THE MOST

# FULFILLING JOURNEYS

START WITH A GOAL

Like most journeys, the journey to better hearing usually begins with the desire to accomplish a goal. In this case, the goal is to finally do something about your hearing loss and stop letting it impact your quality of life.

We say “finally” because unlike eyesight, which people address by getting glasses as soon as it fades – hearing loss tends to be ignored or put off for as long as possible.

The reasons for delay in seeking treatment are as varied as the people who experience hearing loss:

- **The onset of hearing loss is usually gradual** – Making it easier to ignore or go unnoticed.
- **It’s not always recognized for what it is** – Instead, it’s other people talking too softly or mumbling.
- **It’s viewed as inconsequential** – “So what if I can’t hear as well? It’s not hurting anyone but me.”
- **It’s relatively easy to work around** – You can just turn the TV up louder or avoid places where it’s more of a problem.
- **There’s a concern about how hearing aids look and what others will think** – “My hearing isn’t bad enough for hearing aids.”

Once people fully understand the dynamics of hearing loss, the determination to take this fulfilling journey can begin. So let’s start there.

## FACT:

On average, people wait seven years between first noticing their hearing loss and finally taking action.

## Hearing Loss Affects More Than Just You

Many people put off treating their hearing loss because they wrongly assume it’s only harming them. However, your hearing loss can impact others in many ways:

- **Frustration** – When they constantly have to repeat themselves.
- **Misunderstanding** – Your withdrawal from people and activities may be misinterpreted as rudeness or disinterest in others.
- **Concern** – If you are unable to hear warning sounds like smoke detectors, alarms or sirens.
- **Confusion** – When you answer incorrectly, don’t respond at all, or relay the wrong information.

# Understanding Hearing Loss

LET'S START WITH

## SOME FACTS:

**One in five** Americans ages 12 and older experiences hearing loss severe enough to hinder communication.

Nearly **50% of adults** ages 75 and older have hearing impairments.

Hearing loss is the **third most prevalent** chronic condition in older Americans after hypertension and arthritis.

**Men** are more likely than women to experience hearing loss.

About **26 million Americans** between the ages of 20 and 69 have high frequency hearing loss due to exposure to loud noises at work or in leisure activities.

Tinnitus affects up to **50 million Americans**.

Tinnitus is currently the **#1 service-connected disability** for veterans from all periods of service.

(NIDCD, 2013; Li-Korotky, 2012; ATA, 2013; WHO, 2013)

If you have hearing loss, you're not alone. In fact, the World Health Organization estimates that 360 million people worldwide have "disabling hearing loss."

## How Hearing Works

When we become aware of a sound in our environment, it is the result of a remarkable sequence of events.

### Outer Ear

Sound travels through the pinna (external ear) and down the ear canal, striking the eardrum and causing it to vibrate.

### Middle Ear

Vibrations from the eardrum cause the ossicles to vibrate (the three smallest bones in the human body) which, in turn, creates movement of the tiny hair cells (stereocilia) in the inner ear.

### Inner Ear

The movement of the hair cells sends electrical impulses through the auditory nerve to the hearing center of the brain, which translates them to sounds the brain can recognize.

## CAUSES OF HEARING LOSS

Many things can cause our hearing system to stop functioning properly, though the main causes are:

- Natural aging process
- Excessive noise
- Infections
- Variety of diseases, i.e., Meningitis
- Injuries to the head or ear
- Birth defects
- Genetics
- Ototoxic reaction to drugs or cancer treatment (i.e., antibiotics, chemotherapy, radiation)

# Understanding Hearing Loss

HOW

## HEARING LOSS OCCURS

To understand why hearing loss is so pervasive, it's important to first understand how hearing loss happens.

Hearing loss happens when any part of our delicate hearing system stops working properly, whether it's due to damage or deterioration. The most susceptible and common parts to break down are the microscopic **stereocilia**, the thousands of tiny hair cells that detect and send sound impulses to the brain.

When these tiny hair cells become injured, diseased or die naturally, the result is **sensory hearing loss**. This is by far the most common type of hearing loss.

### HOW HEARING LOSS CAN IMPACT YOUR LIFE

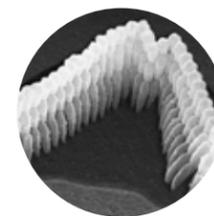
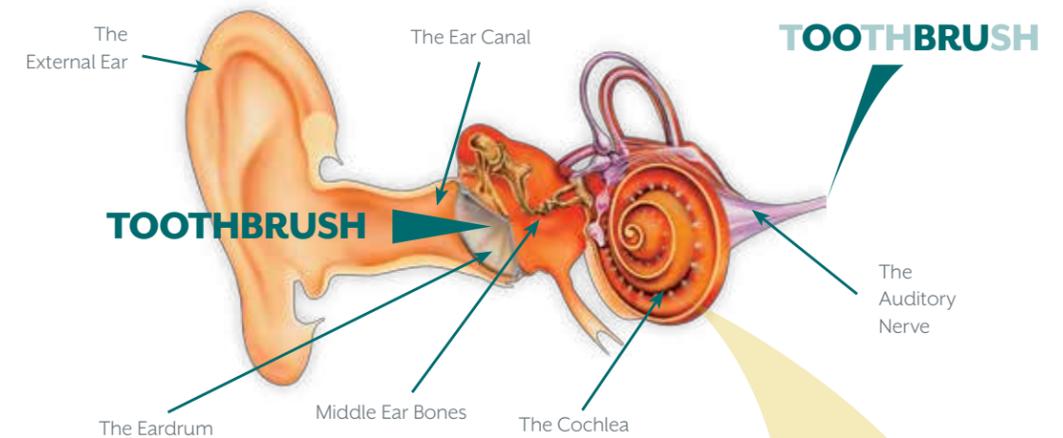
If you think hearing loss is inconsequential, you should know that studies have linked untreated hearing loss to significant issues such as:

- Diminished psychological and overall health
- Impaired memory and ability to learn new tasks
- Reduced alertness and increased risk to personal safety
- Avoidance or withdrawal from social situations
- Social rejection and loneliness
- Fatigue, tension, stress and depression
- Irritability, negativism and anger
- Reduced job performance and earning power

(BHI, 2013)

## tOOthBRUsh?

When the microscopic stereocilia (hair cells) in your cochlea are damaged, they will not send complete signals to your brain, causing you to be unable to understand the consonants within words. For example, the word "TOOTHBRUSH" may sound like "OO--BRU."



**HEALTHY HAIR CELLS** stand erect, and are able to accurately detect sound waves and send sound impulses to the brain.



**DAMAGED HAIR CELLS** are limp, blown out and will no longer stand erect. They are therefore unable to detect sound waves or send sound impulses to the brain.

# Understanding Hearing Loss

WHAT

## HEARING LOSS IS LIKE

You can't recreate a typical hearing loss simply by plugging your ears. A person with normal hearing can hear quiet, medium and loud sounds that vary from low pitch to high pitch with amazing clarity and definition.

But when you have hearing loss, you often lose the ability to hear higher pitched sounds, like the sound of a mosquito near your ear, women's and children's voices, or consonants like T, S and F. Even though you still may be able to hear strong vowel sounds such as A, E and I, speech becomes harder to comprehend.

### THIS IS HOW SPEECH SOUNDS TO PEOPLE WITH HEARING LOSS

Recent research has shown that exposure to loud sound can damage nerve pathways yet leave sensitivity to very soft sounds intact (Kujawa & Liberman, 2009). The result is that speech and music at the levels we like to listen can be distorted, making understanding very difficult. This is why "I hear, but cannot understand," is a common complaint.

### Hearing Loss Checklist

Now that you know more about hearing loss, how do you know if that's what you're experiencing? This quick yes/no quiz might hold the key.

- | YES                      | NO                       |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | You can hear, but you can't understand. Among the first sounds that "disappear" are high-pitched sounds like women's and children's voices. Also, you mistake similar high-pitched sounds, such as "fifty" and "sixty." |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | You find yourself complaining that some people mumble or slur their words.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | You have difficulty understanding what's being said, unless you are facing the speaker.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | You are continually asking certain people to repeat words or phrases, though they feel they are speaking loud enough.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | You prefer the TV or radio louder than others do.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | You have difficulty understanding conversation within a group of people.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | You avoid group meetings, social occasions, public facilities or family gatherings where listening may be difficult.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | You have trouble hearing at the movies, concert halls, houses of worship or other public gatherings — especially where sound sources are at a distance from the listener.   |

**If you answered "yes" to several of these questions, then it's time to choose better hearing.**

## HELP IS AVAILABLE

If you think you or someone you know has hearing loss, the next step is an easy one – confirm it by seeing a hearing healthcare professional.

Whether you consult with an audiologist, an ENT doctor or a hearing aid specialist, it's important to see someone who specializes in hearing issues. Seeing a hearing specialist will ensure you will receive a comprehensive evaluation and precise measurement of your hearing loss.

### WHY SEE A HEARING PROFESSIONAL?

Just as every person is unique, every hearing loss and hearing need is unique, too. That's why it's always recommended that you consult with a hearing healthcare professional.

They are trained experts who have the experience and state-of-the-art equipment needed to inspect your ear canal, accurately measure your hearing loss, assess your unique needs, and prescribe a solution that takes all this important and personalized information into account. You can also count on them to provide all necessary support and ongoing care.

### TIP:

The Better Hearing Institute recommends purchasing hearing aids from hearing healthcare professionals only.

### Need more reasons to feel good about seeking help?

### How about seven!

Research by the Better Hearing Institute concluded that hearing loss treatment is shown to:

- 1 Improve physical health
- 2 Improve emotional stability
- 3 Improve sense of control over life events
- 4 Improve communication in relationships
- 5 Improve intimacy and warmth in family relationships
- 6 Improve ease in communication
- 7 Improve earning power

(BHI, 2013)

# Choose Better Hearing



## WHAT TO EXPECT

### AT YOUR FIRST APPOINTMENT

You took the most difficult step toward improving your hearing when you took the first one – recognizing you need to find out more about your hearing loss and improving your situation. Everything after that is easy, including your initial hearing consultation. Most appointments consist of at least these three steps:

#### 1 HEARING ANALYSIS

After answering questions to establish your general health and hearing history, you will undergo a thorough hearing examination. First, both ears will be visually examined to see if there are any obstructions in the ear canal that might be affecting your hearing.

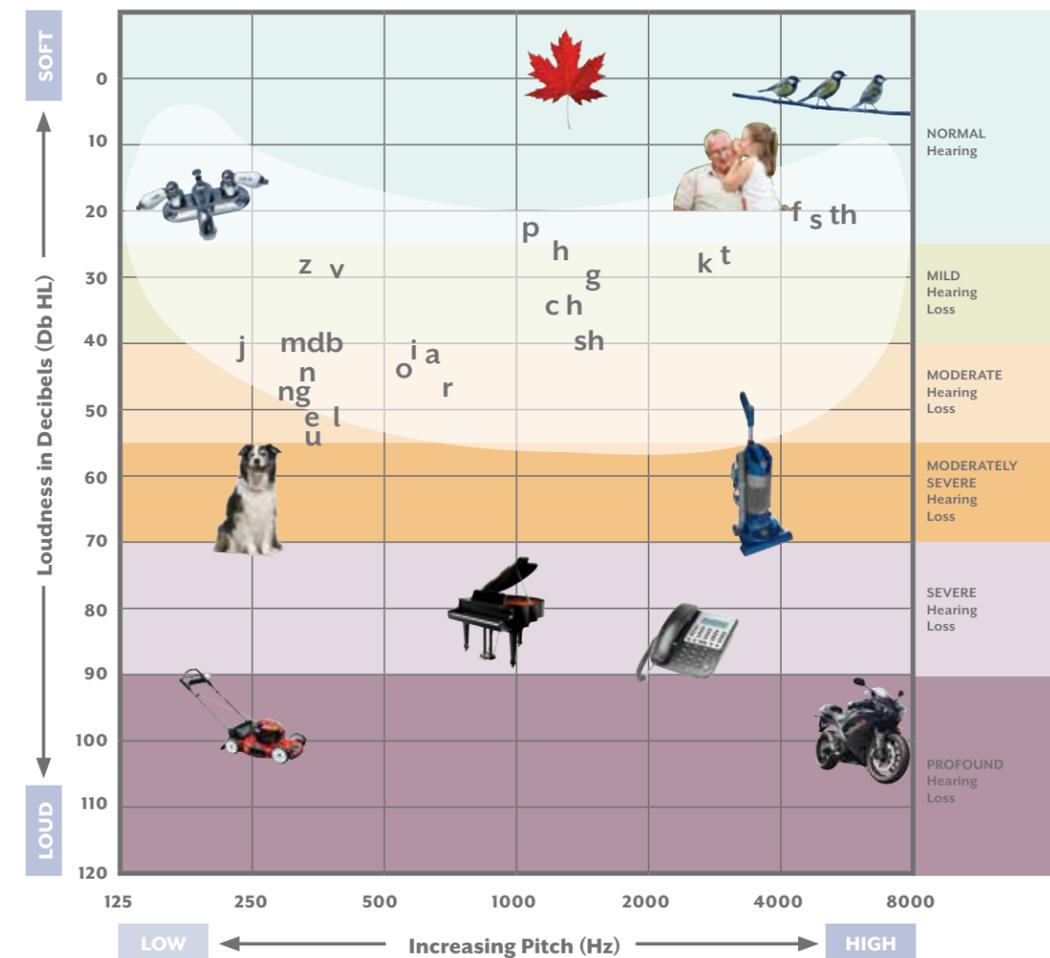
Then, you'll be tested with the latest standard-of-care methods and technology to precisely determine the degree and type of hearing loss you have. This quick and painless test consists of listening and reacting to pure tones in a sound treated booth.

Your results will be illustrated in a detailed **audiogram** that your hearing healthcare professional will review with you.

#### 2 LIFESTYLE DISCUSSION

Next will be a lifestyle assessment. Expect to be asked a lot of questions about the things you like to do and the places you like to go. This is an important step – as your answers help ensure that any solution prescribed is customized specifically for your needs.

### SAMPLE AUDIOGRAM



#### 3 SOLUTION OPTIONS

Once the evaluation and assessment are complete, the hearing healthcare professional will explain your solution options. If it's determined that hearing aids can help, you'll get a personalized demonstration of the different instruments that are appropriate for your level of hearing loss as well as your preferences for size, color and features.

Which leads us to the next step of your hearing journey – Take Action.

## HEARING AIDS

### ARE A SMART SOLUTION

Today, more than ever, the best solution for many individuals with hearing loss is hearing aids. Like all high-tech devices, hearing aids have improved significantly over the past several years in terms of performance and appearance.

This includes “invisible” solutions that fit deep inside your ear and are virtually undetectable when worn, or wireless options that stream audio directly from your TV, radio and phone. Regardless, today’s hearing aids sound better, fit more comfortably and perform more reliably than ever before.

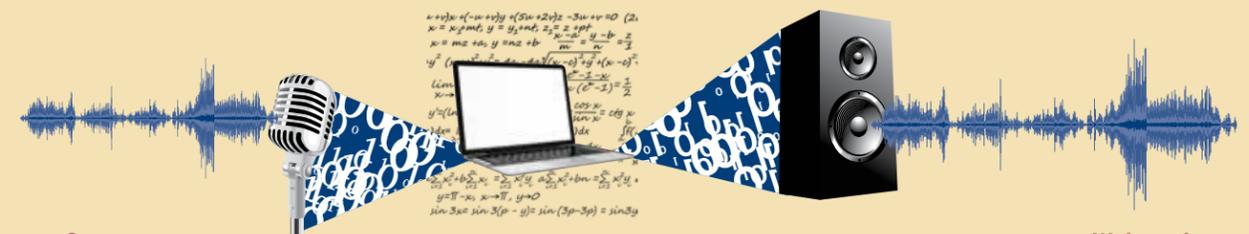
### BE INFORMED

If your hearing healthcare professional recommends hearing aids, you’ll want to be ready with questions. So let’s review what you should know about hearing aids.

### HOW HEARING AIDS HELP

Have you heard negative comments about hearing aids? That’s because the basic premise of hearing aids is to amplify sound. And until the late ‘90s, that’s literally all they did – make everything louder. Today’s hearing aids are designed to do so much more to keep you comfortable and in touch with the world around you.

### How Hearing Aids Work (The Basics):



Someone says hello –

“ello oooh ee you en!”

A microphone picks up the sound and converts it into an electrical/digital signal.

An amplifier increases the strength of the signal. In more sophisticated devices, the signal is manipulated by advanced processing.

A receiver/speaker converts it back into sound and sends it to the inner ear.

The brain “hears” and understands the sound as speech.

We hear them say hello –

“Hello! It sure is good to see you again!”

### HOW DO PERSONAL SOUND AMPLIFIERS (PSAPS) DIFFER FROM HEARING AIDS?

There is a difference between basic amplification products and hearing aids. Hearing aids and personal sound amplifier products both improve the ability to hear sound. However, hearing aids are designed to improve your hearing in difficult situations with advanced technology features like feedback elimination and the ability to hear better on the phone.

## NEW FEATURES

### HAVE COMPLETELY CHANGED HOW HEARING AIDS PERFORM

Today's hearing aids still amplify sounds, but thanks to digital and technological advances, they're much smarter and more selective in what they amplify. Like phones that now do a lot more than just let you talk to people, hearing aids can do a lot more than just make sounds easier to hear.

#### HELP WITH HEARING IN NOISE

One of the biggest challenges people with hearing loss have is hearing in noisy places like restaurants or at social gatherings. It's not that they can't hear, it's that they can't hear clearly. It's all one muddled mass of sound – and the voices of the people they're with don't stand out.

The best of today's hearing aids remedy those challenges with **directional microphones and noise reduction technology**. Programmed specifically to your hearing, they're designed to help you focus on speech from a certain direction. Noise reduction makes listening more comfortable, allowing you to focus on who or what you want to hear.



#### WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY

One of the most popular new advances is wireless hearing aids. With wireless, sound from your TV, computer, MP3 player or phone is streamed right into your ears at the volume you choose and control. This direct connection results in more immersive, enhanced sound, as you're now able to listen at the volume you want without having to turn the volume up loud in the room.

And innovative wireless accessories enable you to seamlessly switch between different settings (like remote microphone, which lets you hear as though you are standing right next to the presenter) and different devices (such as your TV or cell phone). You can also remotely control your hearing aids.

#### INVISIBLE DEVICES

Best of all, digital technology has enabled all these new features and benefits to fit in advanced hearing solutions that are getting smaller and smaller all the time – with some so tiny they rest completely in your ear canal, virtually undetectable when worn.

#### OTHER ADVANCES TO ASK ABOUT

When talking to your hearing healthcare professional, ask about other features that can have an impact on how your hearing aids sound and perform, including:

- **Moisture, Wax & Oil Barrier** – Advancements in mechanical design and protective coatings help make hearing aids water and wax/oil repellent.
- **Channels and Bands** – Additional channels and bands allow your hearing professional to create customized settings for different sound frequency ranges.
- **Feedback Suppression** – There is no reason your hearing aids have to whistle, screech or buzz anymore.
- **Ear-to-Ear Processing** – Means that both your hearing aids “work together” to create a better listening experience.

# Take Action

## HEARING AID

# STYLES

Hearing aids come in a wide range of styles. Your hearing healthcare professional will recommend one or more types based on factors such as your level of hearing loss, aesthetic preferences, lifestyle needs and budget. Most Behind-The-Ear and Receiver-in-Canal styles come in a range of colors and metallic finishes to complement your hair or skin tone.

### Invisible-In-The-Canals (IICs)



This custom-fit style is inserted farther into the ear canal than other styles, making it virtually undetectable to others. IIC hearing aids are designed to be removed daily to promote good ear health.

### Completely-In-Canal Hearing Aids (CICs)



CIC hearing instruments are custom-made to fit completely in the ear canal. Only the tip of a small plastic "handle" shows outside the canal, which is used to insert and remove the instrument.

### In-The-Canal Hearing Aids (ITCs)



Custom earmold that fits securely in the ear canal. A smaller portion shows in the outer ear. The ITC style offers easy insertion and removal.

### In-The-Ear Hearing Aids (ITEs)



Custom earmold that fits within the outer portion of the ear. The larger face plate on the ITE style allows for more user-controlled functions.

### Receiver-In-Canal Hearing Aids (RICs)



Barely visible when worn, the RIC style is an instrument in which the receiver (or speaker) is inside the ear canal. Thin electrical wires are used instead of a plastic acoustical tube, reducing distortion. RIC hearing aids provide a comfortable, open fit and are cosmetically appealing.

### Behind-The-Ear Hearing Aids (BTEs)



The world's most common style. The hearing technology is housed in a casing that rests behind the ear. A clear plastic acoustical tube directs amplified sound into an earbud or a customized earmold that is fitted inside the ear canal. Some manufacturers also offer a mini BTE or a Power BTE.

## Hearing Aid Technologies

What type of hearing device is right for you also depends on lifestyle, aesthetic and budget preferences.

### Wireless

Designed to deliver superior sound quality, these advanced devices also enable direct sound streaming of TVs, music, phones and more.

### Non-Wireless

Designed with many of the same performance features as wireless hearing aids, minus the ability to stream sound directly from media devices.

### Invisible

Designed to rest deep inside your ear canal where no one can see them, while still delivering exceptional sound quality.

### Personal Sound Amplifier Products (PSAPs)

Typically stripped of sound enhancement features, these rudimentary devices are a throwback to the old analog hearing aids that basically just made all sounds louder.

## THE QUESTION

EVERYONE ASKS

One of the first things first-time hearing aid buyers want to know is “How much is a pair going to cost?” The short answer is, “Anywhere from \$6,000 to \$500.” The right answer is, “It depends on what you need.” In other words – people have different hearing needs, not all hearing aids are alike, and not all service packages are the same.

When considered along with other quality-of-life items that you pay for monthly (for instance, cell phones, cable TV or even coffee), the financial investment is very comparable and definitely worth it.

Remember, too, that hearing aids are highly sophisticated medical devices fit by educated and trained professionals, and typically include additional benefits and services like follow-up visits, repairs and counseling.

### THERE'S A RANGE FOR A REASON

Like many things you buy—from televisions to cell phones to glasses—there is a wide range of pricing that applies to hearing aids. They're available in a variety of styles, with a range of high-tech features, which means you'll typically pay less for big and basic than you will for hearing aids that are little and loaded.

Features discussed earlier that cancel noise, eliminate feedback, improve high-frequency audibility and enable direct connectivity to phones, TVs and music greatly improve performance and enhance everyday listening, but also increase costs. Unfortunately, most insurance programs don't cover the cost of hearing aids. For details on pricing and financing options, talk to your hearing healthcare professional.

## What's Right For You?

Hearing aids today are designed to accommodate and enhance a variety of different listening environments. What you'll want and what it costs will depend on how busy and active you are, and what types of environments you frequent.



### Quiet

Basic technology designed to help people who are less active, or spend the majority of their time in quiet environments — like reading and listening to music.



### One-On-One

Select technology designed for simple listening environments such as one-on-one conversations and small groups.



### Noisy

Advanced technology designed to be used in relatively easy listening situations with some noise — like quiet restaurants, meetings and card games.



### Very Noisy

Premium technology designed for active people that frequent a variety of listening environments, including events with crowds or high noise levels — like sporting events, noisy restaurants and concerts.

## THE RIGHT FIT

Today's best hearing aids are precision instruments, utilizing advanced technology that can and should be customized to fit your specific hearing loss and your unique lifestyle needs. Determining which hearing aids are right for you depends on a variety of important and unique factors, including:

- The nature and severity of your hearing loss
- Your eyesight and dexterity
- The size and shape of your outer and inner ear
- The types of activities you enjoy
- Cosmetic concerns

That's why getting fit with the advice and consultation of an experienced hearing healthcare professional can't be overemphasized.

## GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR INVESTMENT

The non-profit Better Hearing Institute reiterates this point, writing in a recent published report, "The [hearing aid fitting] process requires a complete in-person hearing assessment in a sound booth; the training and skills of a credentialed hearing healthcare professional in order to prescriptively fit the hearing aids using sophisticated computer programs; and appropriate in-person follow-up and counseling. This is not possible when consumers purchase one-size-fits-all hearing aids over the Internet or elsewhere" (BHI, 2011).

## ALWAYS CONSULT WITH AN EXPERT

Hearing healthcare professionals will make sure you select the most appropriate hearing aid style and technology level to best meet your personal hearing needs and lifestyle.

# Time, Practice & Experience

HELP

## ENSURE SUCCESS

In a short while, wearing your new hearing aids will be second nature, and you'll wonder why you didn't get them sooner.

However, it's important to know that complete satisfaction won't happen overnight.

Unlike eyeglasses, which, when put on, give you immediate results, hearing aids typically require a short transition period. You'll need to get used to how they sound, how they feel, and get in the routine of wearing them every day. It will take practice, time and patience to fully realize 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 improved hearing. Much of the success with your hearing aids will depend on your desire to learn and a 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 /k/ 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 up to 4-6 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.

Your hearing professional has access to resources specifically designed to make practice productive *and* fun – including personalized websites filled with clinically proven hearing skills training exercises and interactive games that you can do at home.

Once you have logged the sufficient number of hours for your brain to re-acclimate to ambient sounds, you will be able to go on with your life without thinking so much about your hearing.



### 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 might need to take them in 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, it will sound more natural.
- Background noise is normal. Normal-hearing people 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.

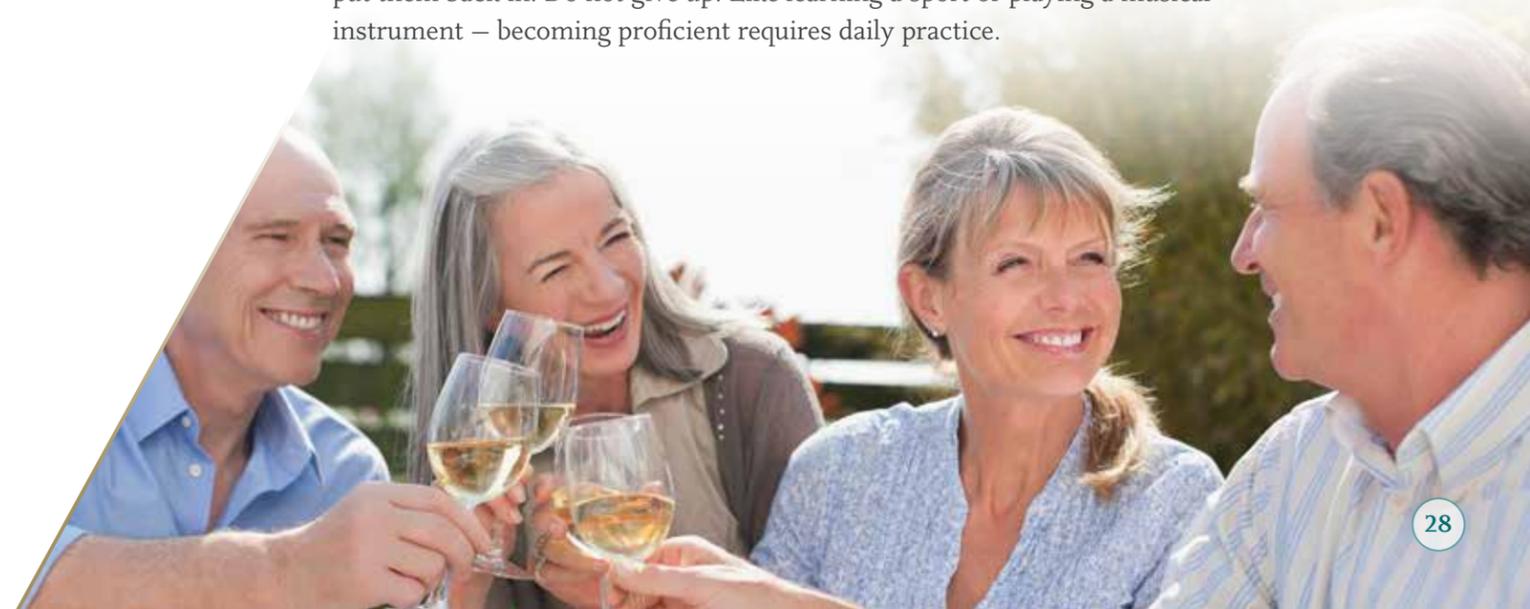
## ASSIGNMENTS

### Week **ONE**

- ❑ If necessary, 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.
- ❑ Practice listening to the different speech patterns of different people. The goal is to find a comfortable volume level for listening, not to try and understand everything that is being said. Hearing and understanding improves with time.
- ❑ If you become fatigued, take a break. Put your hearing aids back on a couple of hours later.
- ❑ Practice getting used to your new hearing aids a little every day. Be patient. Do not wear your hearing aids all day long during this period. Your progress will depend on your commitment to hearing better.

### Week **TWO**

- ❑ 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 person 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.



# Time, Practice & Experience

## Week **THREE**

- ❑ 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.
- ❑ Call your hearing healthcare professional with any questions you have during this process. They understand the difficulties you face dealing with your hearing journey, and are there to help.
- ❑ 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)

Like any state-of-the-art device or high-tech instrument, your hearing aids need to be well cared for to work their best. Follow the care and cleaning instructions given to you at your fitting, and your hearing aids should provide years and years of performance and comfort.



### 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 more safe and secure
- Feeling less isolated
- Being more engaged with family and friends
- Enjoying music and TV to the fullest
- Feeling more aware and confident
- Communicating easier
- 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!**

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