



Hearing Aids 101

Congratulations! By having an audiologist fit you for your hearing aids, you've taken the first step toward improving your hearing. Now that you've received your aids, please take a few minutes to learn these quick tips for maximizing their benefits.

What to Expect

- Hearing in quiet settings should be improved.
- Hearing in moderate background noise should be improved.
- Hearing in loud background noise should be NO WORSE than without the hearing aids.
- Soft speech should be audible, average speech should be comfortable and loud speech should be loud but never uncomfortable.
- Your earmolds should be comfortable.
- Your own voice should be acceptable to you.
- You should not experience feedback noise.

Your hearing likely deteriorated gradually over time, so you should not expect your hearing aids to immediately return your hearing to normal. Using hearing aids successfully takes time and patience. Remember that it is important to tell your audiologist about any problems you are experiencing so appropriate adjustments can be made. Plan to consult your audiologist annually—more frequently if you notice a change in your hearing—to check on your hearing aids' performance and to stay up to date with the rapidly advancing technology.

Listen to Your Audiologist

Feel free to ask any questions you have during your instruction session. Always attend any follow-up sessions or get any maintenance scheduled that your audiologist recommends. If you're having a problem with your aid, make an appointment to have it checked; it may need only a simple adjustment.

Read Up on Your Aids' Features

Just like a camera or other sophisticated piece of equipment, hearing aids provide the best results when used properly. Read the manual thoroughly before using your aids.

Adapting to Your Aids

While each person's experience will vary, hearing aids may allow you to experience certain sounds you have never heard before (or at least not for some time). Relearning takes place in the central auditory nervous system (brain) and not in the ear itself. Recent experiments suggest that a listener's ability to comprehend speech may continue to increase over several months when wearing a new amplification system.

Be Consistent

Hearing aids are not just for special occasions. For best results, wear your aids every day. Your brain needs to learn how to process sounds for your hearing aids; by only wearing them occasionally, you're "teasing" your brain and asking it to go back and forth.

Give Them TLC

Your manual contains tips for the best care of your hearing aids, such as keeping them dry and clean at all times. It's also important to keep your ears clean. Earwax can reduce your aids' efficiency or even cause them to malfunction. Cleaning your ears is not a do-it-yourself procedure—check with your audiologist about scheduling a professional cleaning.

Educate Others

Your relatives want to communicate with you, so they'll appreciate knowing how to do it. Tell them to look directly at you when they talk and to speak at normal volume but a little more slowly than usual.

It takes time to adjust to hearing aids. Your listening skills should get better as you become accustomed to amplification, and hearing aids can also improve your communication. Protect your investment by dedicating a little time to get acquainted with your hearing aids.