



Helping your loved one  
adjust to new  
hearing  
instruments





**B**y deciding to wear hearing instruments, **your loved one has just made a decision that will directly improve the quality of his or her life.** Now, you have the opportunity to share in this joyful experience and help make an easy adjustment to hearing instrumentation.

Most hearing losses occur gradually, over many months or even years. In the same way, **you can expect it will take some time for your loved one to become reconditioned to the wonderful world of sound.**



**T**hese sounds of everyday living encompass soft and normal sounds, and **also the harsh noises to which a hearing impaired person has become unaccustomed.** Although you may take most sounds for granted, keep in mind that your loved one may be hearing these sounds for the first time in years. **Your patience and understanding are vital during this period of readjustment.**

Here are some key areas in which family and friends can help a loved one adjust to new hearing instruments.



### Speak at a Normal Volume

Many hearing instrument wearers complain that others talk more loudly to them than usual. To a new hearing instrument user, this can be especially annoying and can be more of a hinderance in better communication than a help. **Remember that a hearing instrument is an amplifier.** Just as you would not shout into a public address system, you should be confident that the hearing instrument is doing a fine job amplifying on its own. There should be no need for you to speak loudly to a person wearing hearing instruments during most conversations.



### Speak Naturally

Avoid the tendency to exaggerate words when speaking to a hearing instrument user. **Speech will be more easily understood if you keep a natural, distinct and clear pattern.** Listen to your own speech habits. If you speak slightly faster than average, slow your speech for better communication.



## Offer Clues When the Conversation Changes Topics

Even for those who have normal hearing, it can be challenging to follow a conversation when there are several topics being discussed. For a hearing impaired person, this is especially difficult. You can be a great help in this situation if you will actually tell your loved one that a topic has changed when he or she does not seem to be following the content of the conversation. Use the "buddy system" for conversation when in groups.



## Visual Cues

Since your loved one has just begun wearing hearing instruments, remember that he or she is relearning to listen. Watching each other during conversation is a very important part of this process. **When holding conversations, first, be sure that you have the attention of your loved one before you speak.**

Also, position yourself so that you are facing each other. This gives you both a listening advantage. **A 3-6 foot distance between you and the hearing instrument user is ideal.** Of course, you will not want to chew, smoke, or cover your mouth while talking, since visual cues help in understanding speech.





## Background Noise

Your loved one will also hear better during conversations when background noises are minimized. Some situations allow us to control the noise in our environment, others do not. For example, reducing the volume on the radio or television when you're trying to converse usually improves speech comprehension. However, since background sounds in some situations simply cannot be controlled, you may wish to postpone important conversations until there's an opportunity to talk in a quiet setting.



## Rephrase, Don't Repeat

Many hearing instrument wearers tell us that they realize how frustrating repetition can be for the speaker. So, if your loved one asks you to repeat what you've just said, the best approach is **NOT to repeat. Instead, rephrase.**

Sounds in speech are broken up into pitch ranges and, depending upon the hearing loss, some sounds might be more easily understood than others. Many sounds look the same on the lips as other sounds. For example, the words "time" and "dime" look alike on the lips, but have very different sounds.

By rephrasing what you've just said, rather than simply repeating it, you have another chance to use different speech sounds and visual cues which



## Hearing Instrumentation is Just the Beginning

The use of amplification is often a critical part of improved communication. **Consider the purchase of a hearing instrument as the beginning of a true rehabilitation process.** Together, you and your loved one can pleasantly go through the adjustment period and discover the joys of better hearing.

If you need more information on gaining the most benefit from amplification, consult your hearing care professional.



## Congratulations

By seeking professional hearing healthcare and wearing new hearing instruments, you've taken the first step toward a **better quality of life.**

