



Welcome back to the world of sound

How to get the most from your hearing
instruments





Congratulations on your decision to wear hearing instruments. With the help of your hearing care professional, you've made a commitment to improve the quality of your life through better hearing.

While many of you will notice an immediate improvement in your ability to hear, **others of you may require an adjustment period.** As you begin wearing your new instruments, **be patient.** Soon, you'll realize the full benefit of hearing instrumentation.



Communication: More than a Two-Way Street

Since most hearing losses occur gradually, chances are, you slowly adapted to your hearing loss and learned to compensate for it. Now that you have made the **commitment** to rebuild your communication skills, **realize that good communication often requires more than improved hearing.**

Although many of us do not realize this, communicating with others also involves **attention to visual cues, concentration on the speaker and subject, and understanding.**



Keep it in Perspective

A realistic view of your hearing loss and your new hearing instruments' capabilities will help you adjust comfortably to your new way of life. Accept that your hearing impairment is permanent unless your physician has told you otherwise. Also recognize that your hearing instruments cannot restore your hearing to normal. **These instruments are just one part of your total hearing rehabilitation program.**



As you first begin wearing your new hearing instruments, refrain from making quick judgments as to their performance. The sounds of everyday living include soft and normal sounds, and also the harsh noises to which you've become unaccustomed. **Again, be patient! You'll soon become reacquainted with the sounds you've been missing.**



Sticking with the Program

Many hearing care professionals recommend a wearing schedule for first-time hearing instrument users. Follow this schedule for best results.

In addition, the following suggestions will be helpful. Remember, the goal of hearing instrument use is full-time wearing. Infrequent use will not provide you with the best outcome in your rehabilitation process.

Begin by wearing your hearing instruments in quiet, familiar surroundings, like your home. Use a low, but comfortable volume setting. This will help you adjust to everyday sounds, especially the sound of your own voice.



Learn to identify simple sounds and environmental noises in your home. Practice conversing with one person in a quiet setting. Background noises can be frustrating at first, so keep these to a minimum in the beginning.

Train yourself to selectively listen in noisy environments. This will take concentration, as listening in noisy situations is more difficult for everyone. **Practice focusing on what you want to hear** and it will soon become easier.

As you become more and more comfortable with amplification, expand your wearing time to include wearing your hearing instruments all day, every day.



Actions Speak Louder Than Words

During conversations, be sure to use all of the information available to help you hear and understand. Do the following:

1. Sit, stand or turn so that light in the room allows you to see the speaker's mouth and gestures.
2. Watch the speaker's mouth as he or she talks (lipreading), so eyes can supplement information to your ears.



3. Pay attention to hand gestures which may give you additional information or emphasize the speaker's message.
4. Ask your hearing care professional about the availability of aural rehabilitation classes in your area. Rehabilitation classes teach methods for improving communication abilities. Often, these classes include your friends and family.



Stepping Out

To maximize your enjoyment when attending public meetings, such as religious activities, conferences, the theater or other gatherings, you might wish to do some pre-planning. For instance, **plan to sit near the front of the room in the middle section** so that you are **facing the speaker or the sound source**.

If you wear only one hearing instrument, position yourself so that the aided ear is facing the speaker or sound source. Before a meeting, find out what topics will be discussed, if possible. If you cannot determine the topic, ask the person seated next to you during the meeting to let you know when topics change.



Give Yourself Credit

Lastly, successful adjustment to your hearing loss and your hearing instruments will be better accomplished **when you take responsibility for your own better hearing**. Be assertive, but kind in telling others your special needs for improved communication. Initiate conversations and involve yourself in conversations going on around you.

If you need more information on how to get the most from your hearing instruments, consult your hearing care professional.

