

Joan's guide to making the most of your HearingDirect.com hearing aid...



Thank you for purchasing a HearingDirect.com hearing aid. Please take the time to read through the following information. It's designed to help you get the best out of your hearing aid from the very beginning, particularly if you have never worn a hearing aid before. We also recommend you share this with family and friends and enlist their support.

How well and how fast you adapt to your hearing aid depends on several factors, including...

- the type and severity of your hearing loss
- how long you have had the loss
- whether it happened gradually over many years or whether it was sudden
- how well your ears can discriminate between different sounds

Your hearing aid is not a cure for hearing loss

Hearing aids are aids to better hearing. They are not cures for hearing loss, but help make the most of your residual hearing. If you expect to hear better, you will be pleased with your new hearing aid, if you expect to hear like a teenager again you may well be disappointed!

Give yourself time to adapt to your new hearing aid

It comes as a shock to many people that they need time to adjust to wearing hearing aids – surely wearing new hearing aids should be like putting on new glasses – instant clear sight?

The truth is, you need to give your brain time to relearn how to hear and process all the new sounds it is now hearing again – especially if your hearing loss was gradual, as is often the case. All these 'new' sounds can be overwhelming. It can take time to get reacquainted with the sounds you may not have heard well for years. Adapting to your new hearing aids may take a day or weeks – everyone is different. The important thing is to keep at it. Don't compare your progress with others.

Fitting your hearing aids correctly

Many hearing aid wearers find it difficult at first to insert their hearing aid/s correctly. Be patient, as you practice it will become easier over time. Wax build up may be a factor influencing comfort and sound; consider having a nurse, doctor or hearing care professional examine your ear canals.

Getting used to a new way of hearing sounds

One of the biggest surprises you may experience when wearing new hearing aids is how loud everyday sounds now seem. Initially, you may find you cannot stand rustling papers, running water or cutlery rattling together.

Hearing aids need to amplify sounds so that you can hear them, yet must not amplify them so much that you perceive the louder sounds as painful. Your hearing aid has been pre-programmed at a safe level and the algorithms within it will ensure that incoming sounds of different volumes are processed appropriately.

How long should you wear your hearing aids for?

Gradually building up the number of hours you wear your hearing aid each day should help you get used to wearing the hearing aid in your ear. To begin with, do not wear your hearing aids in noisy places. You need to be comfortable in quiet places first. If your hearing aids begin to bother you, take them

off and give yourself a rest. Put them on again later.

Tackling complex and noisy situations

When you are keen to tackle more difficult and noisy listening situations e.g. in crowds and at parties, talk to one person at a time. Don't try to follow everyone at once – a unique skill in itself! In restaurants, try starting with quiet, well-lit ones. Gradually work up to noisier restaurants as you feel comfortable.

Clarity of speech

When you lose your hearing, sounds are not only softer, but speech may also sound distorted. This is because typically you lose most of your hearing in the high frequencies. It is these higher frequencies that give speech much of its clarity.

If you still have some high frequency hearing, your hearing aid will specifically amplify these higher frequencies much more than the lower frequencies that you may hear reasonably well. This will help you hear clearer speech once again. It may not be perfect – but it will be better.

How should your hearing aids feel?

Learn to feel comfortable with your hearing aids. It's normal that your ears will feel full, (and probably hot and sweaty too) like you have something stuffed in them – because you do. Wearing hearing aids may feel strange at first, but they should never hurt.

Getting used to your new voice

It may be helpful to read aloud to yourself. You may be surprised at how loud or different your voice sounds. This is normal. Slowly you will come to like your 'new' voice.

What happens when you take your hearing aids off?

Your hearing may seem 'dull' when you take your aid off. This is because you become used to hearing much better when using it.

How to make your hearing aids more effective

Don't forget to keep using other strategies for better hearing and listening as appropriate: Move closer and position yourself so that you are facing the talker; try to ensure that the speaker's face is well lit and you can see it clearly. Watch the speaker's face, lips, and gestures for clues to what's being said. Don't strain to hear every word. People with normal hearing miss words and 'fill in' from surrounding sentences.

We wish you a successful hearing experience.

For more of my hints and tips, or questions answered visit www.HearingDirect.com