

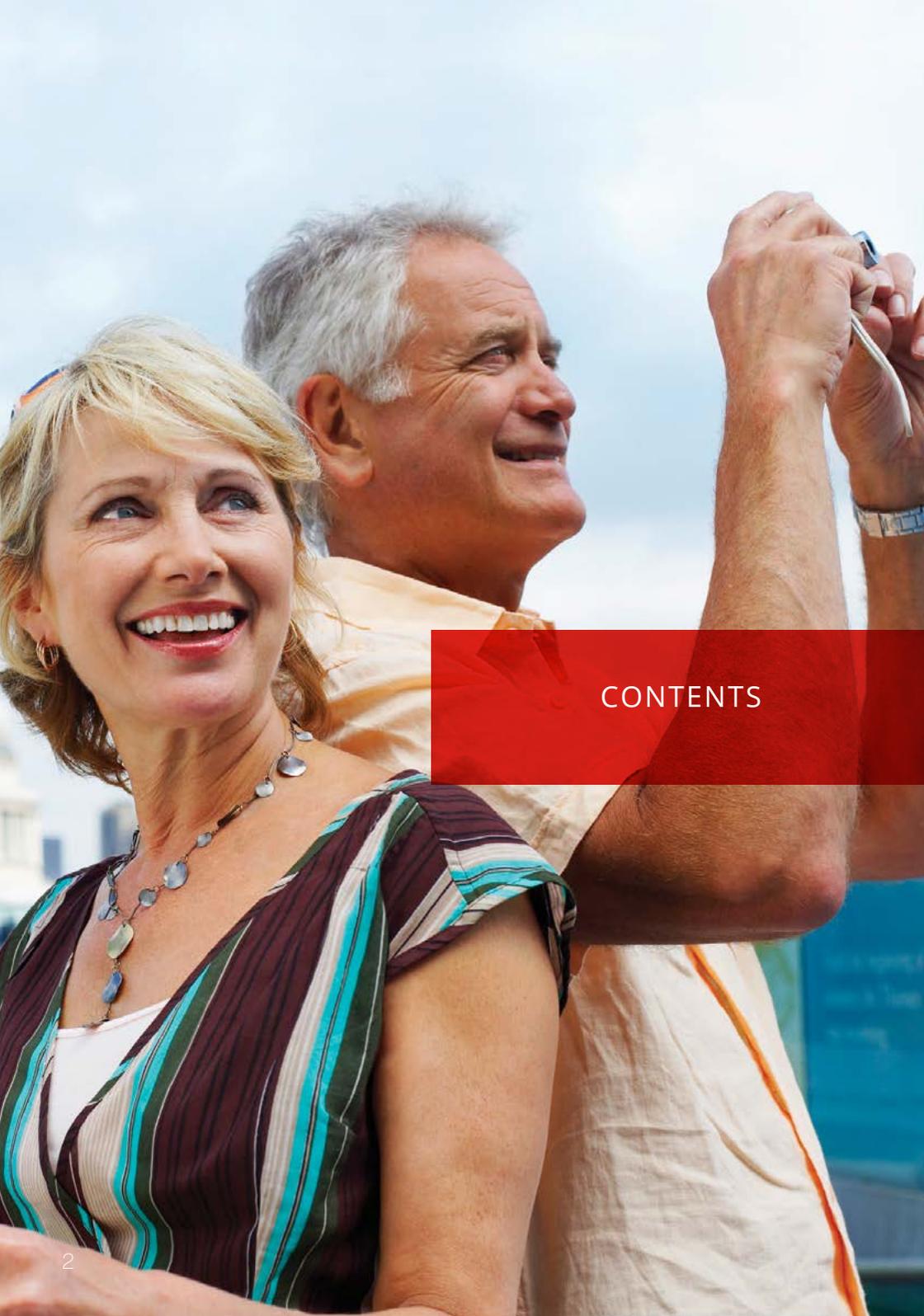


Your Guide to Hearing

INFORMATION YOU NEED TO MAKE A SOUND DECISION



Stourbridge
Hearing
Centre



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Signs of hearing loss

Our ability to hear defines who we are and how we communicate. When everything works as it should, our sense of hearing has the power to inform, entertain and connect us with family and friends.

As we grow older, many people begin to experience hearing loss. This is a natural part of the ageing process and develops gradually over time. Already at age 20, we've lost the ability to perceive some of the sounds infants can hear. By the time we reach 30 or 40, subtle but significant losses have begun to occur.

As we continue to live longer, coupled with growing exposure to loud noise from modern lifestyles, hearing impairment is increasingly common at an earlier age.

Even a slight hearing loss can have a negative impact on our ability to work, socialise and enjoy life. Once we reach our 80s, more than half of us suffer from significant hearing loss.

COMMON SIGNS OF HEARING LOSS

- Frequently having to ask people to repeat themselves
- Having trouble hearing in noisy or busy places
- Misunderstanding conversations
- Finding that people are mumbling
- Increasing the volume on the television
- Avoiding social situations

If any of these sound familiar, it's a good idea to make an appointment with your local Hearing Professional who will carry out a thorough evaluation of your hearing. They will confirm if you have a hearing loss and what its causes might be. Together, you and your Hearing Professional will determine the correct course of action.

Hearing loss treatment is a simple process that can quickly get you back on track and enjoying life to the fullest.

If you need a hearing device, this booklet will help you make the right choice. The sooner you take this first step, the sooner you can begin your journey back to better hearing.



HEARING LOSS TREATMENT CAN QUICKLY
GET YOU BACK ON TRACK AND ENJOYING
LIFE TO THE FULLEST

Hearing instrument technology

The most important part of any hearing instrument is the technology inside. Put simply, the more sophisticated the technology the more precise and realistic the listening experience.

Until now, the majority of hearing instruments used either analogue or digital technology to process sound, but the very latest advances in hearing instrument technology have led to the introduction of state-of-the-art hearing instruments with wireless technology.

ANALOGUE HEARING INSTRUMENTS

This was the simplest and least expensive hearing instrument technology. Analogue hearing instruments amplified sounds, both speech and noise. Quiet sounds were amplified until they were loud enough to be heard, but loud sounds that were already loud were given less amplification, so you were protected against uncomfortably loud sound levels. Many of the advanced features which are offered in digital instruments were not available in analogue instruments.

DIGITAL HEARING INSTRUMENTS

With the advent of digital sound quality, patients were able to experience significantly better sound quality. Digital hearing instruments are embedded with computer chips which allow sound to be amplified at the specific frequencies where hearing loss has occurred. This enables the hearing care professional to customise the hearing instrument to your unique needs, resulting in a more realistic and natural hearing experience.

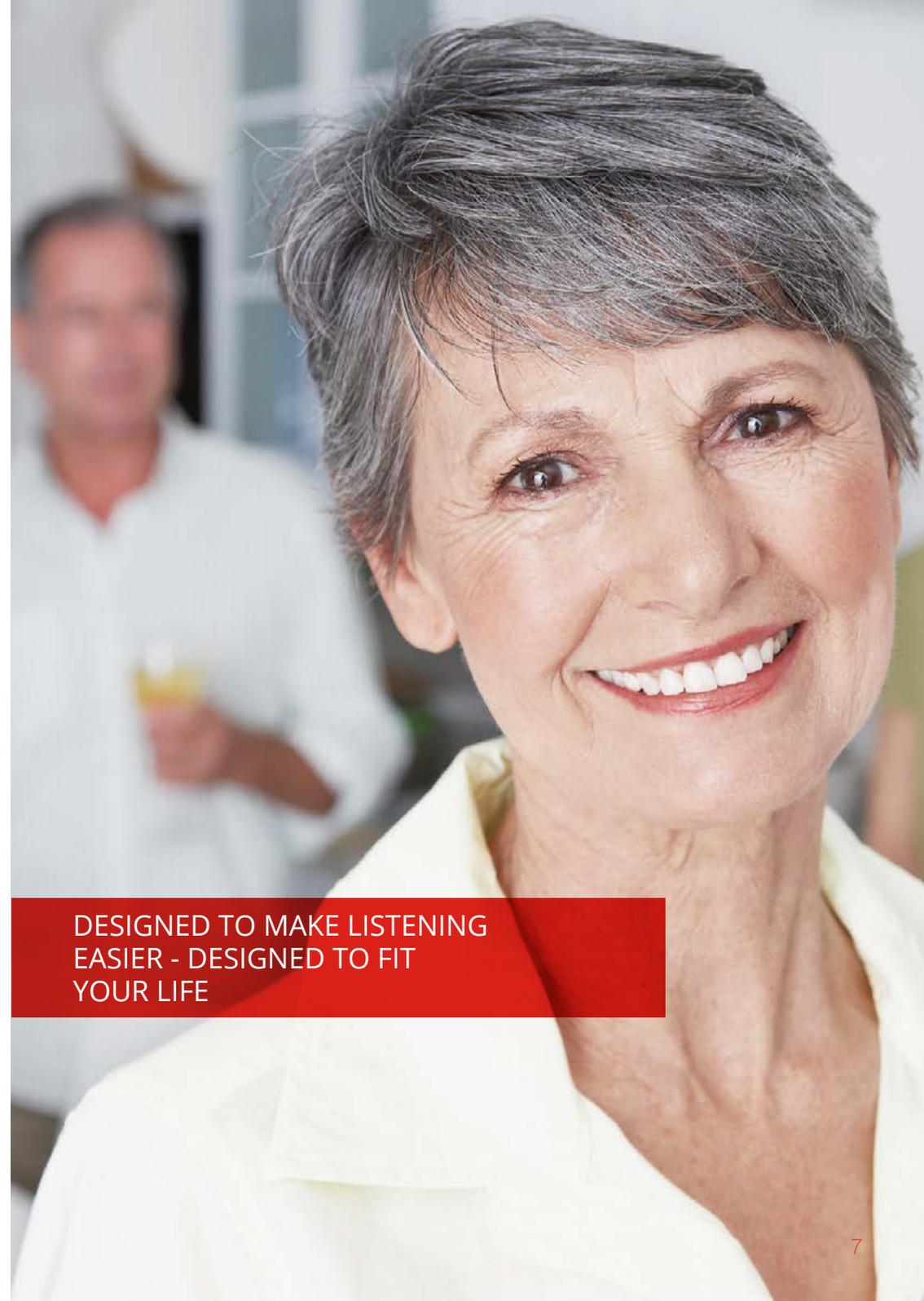
WIRELESS HEARING AIDS

Today, we use many devices and gadgets at work, on the move and around the home such as televisions, radios and MP3 players. Wireless hearing aids can connect up to many of these devices by streaming stereo sound from the TV, radio, computer and mobile phone directly to the hearing aids with no wires, neck-loops or cables for a truly hands-free listening experience. Wireless hearing aids are sophisticated, high-performance hearing aids which deliver a precise and natural listening experience to make sounds clearer in every listening environment.

MADE FOR iPhone HEARING AIDS

Everyone loves their iPhone®. It's easy to understand why. The iPhone® is a phone, calendar, camera, entertainment centre and much more. It's an indispensable part of everyday life.

Halo brings what people love about the iPhone® to anyone and everyone with a hearing loss. As easy and intuitive as the iPhone® itself, Halo hearing aids are ideal for people who want to stay engaged and active.



**DESIGNED TO MAKE LISTENING
EASIER - DESIGNED TO FIT
YOUR LIFE**

Balanced hearing

ONE EAR OR TWO?

Like our vision, our hearing mechanism relies on input from both ears to locate sound sources. One ear simply cannot do the work of two. To achieve the most natural hearing experience, it is vital that both ears work equally well.

Two-ear hearing is called binaural. Recent studies show that those wearing two instruments understand more clearly and enjoy better sound quality. Approximately two-thirds of new hearing instrument wearers opt for dual hearing instruments. These wearers report a higher level of satisfaction than those who purchase a single instrument.

Our ears allow us to focus on specific sounds and conversations. Hearing with both ears helps the brain to distinguish speech from noise more easily than if only one ear receives the sound.

A BALANCING ACT

Two ears make our hearing more balanced and enable us to determine which direction a sound is coming from, like the location of an oncoming car or the position of someone speaking to you.

Hearing with both ears is also far more comfortable. With both ears working together, less amplification is needed to hear everyday sounds and lower volume means less distracting background noise.

Hearing clearly again will have a positive impact on your relationships, your career and your leisure activities. Your local Hearing Professional can provide you with expert advice and assistance on your hearing.



10 REASONS WHY PEOPLE FIND TWO HEARING AIDS BETTER THAN ONE

- Better understanding in speech
- Better understanding in a group or even in a noisy situation
- Better ability to tell the direction sounds are coming from
- Better sound quality
- Greater listening comfort
- Hearing is less tiring and more pleasant
- Keeping both ears active preserves speech understanding in both ears
- Preference
- Satisfaction
- Tinnitus masking

Hearing instrument styles

Hearing instruments come in a variety of sizes, from tiny, invisible-in-the-canal models to those which sit behind the ear. The right hearing instrument style and size depends on several factors, including: degree of hearing loss, listening requirements, ear shape and size, the ability to handle and control instruments and lifestyle needs.

Many people are concerned about the effect a hearing aid will have on their appearance but it's worth remembering that others will be far less aware of your instrument than you.

Today's hearing instruments can be very discreet. Your Hearing Professional will discuss with you the different factors relating to each style before recommending a specific device. Understanding some of the differences between the hearing aid styles will help you and your hearing professional choose the instrument that's right for you.

INVISIBLE IN THE CANAL (IIC)

The newest custom fit style is virtually invisible when worn. Living in the second bend of the ear, the IIC comes complete with the world's industry-leading technology.



COMPLETELY IN THE CANAL (CIC)

These devices fit completely in the ear canal. Only the head of a tiny plastic line - with which you insert or remove the instrument - shows above the canal.



IN THE CANAL (ITC)

ITC instruments feature a custom earmould that fits down the ear canal and a small portion that faces out into the outer ear.



IN THE EAR (ITE)

ITE instruments house the technology components in a custom earmould that fits within the outer portion of the ear.



RECEIVER IN CANAL ABSOLUTE POWER (RIC AP)

The RIC AP combines a custom earmould with a sleek RIC instrument allowing people with even the most severe hearing loss to enjoy style without sacrificing power and performance.



RECEIVER IN CANAL (RIC)

The RIC device is small, discreet and incredibly quick to fit; perfect for many first-time wearers.



MINI BEHIND THE EAR (miniBTE)

The mini BTE rests behind the ear. The case at the back of the ear houses the technology, while a clear tube then directs amplified sound into the ear canal via a custom earmould or earbud.



BEHIND THE EAR (BTE)

BTE instruments' technology is housed in a casing that rests behind the ear. A clear plastic tube then directs amplified sound into an earmould inside the ear.



Adjusting to a better life with hearing instruments

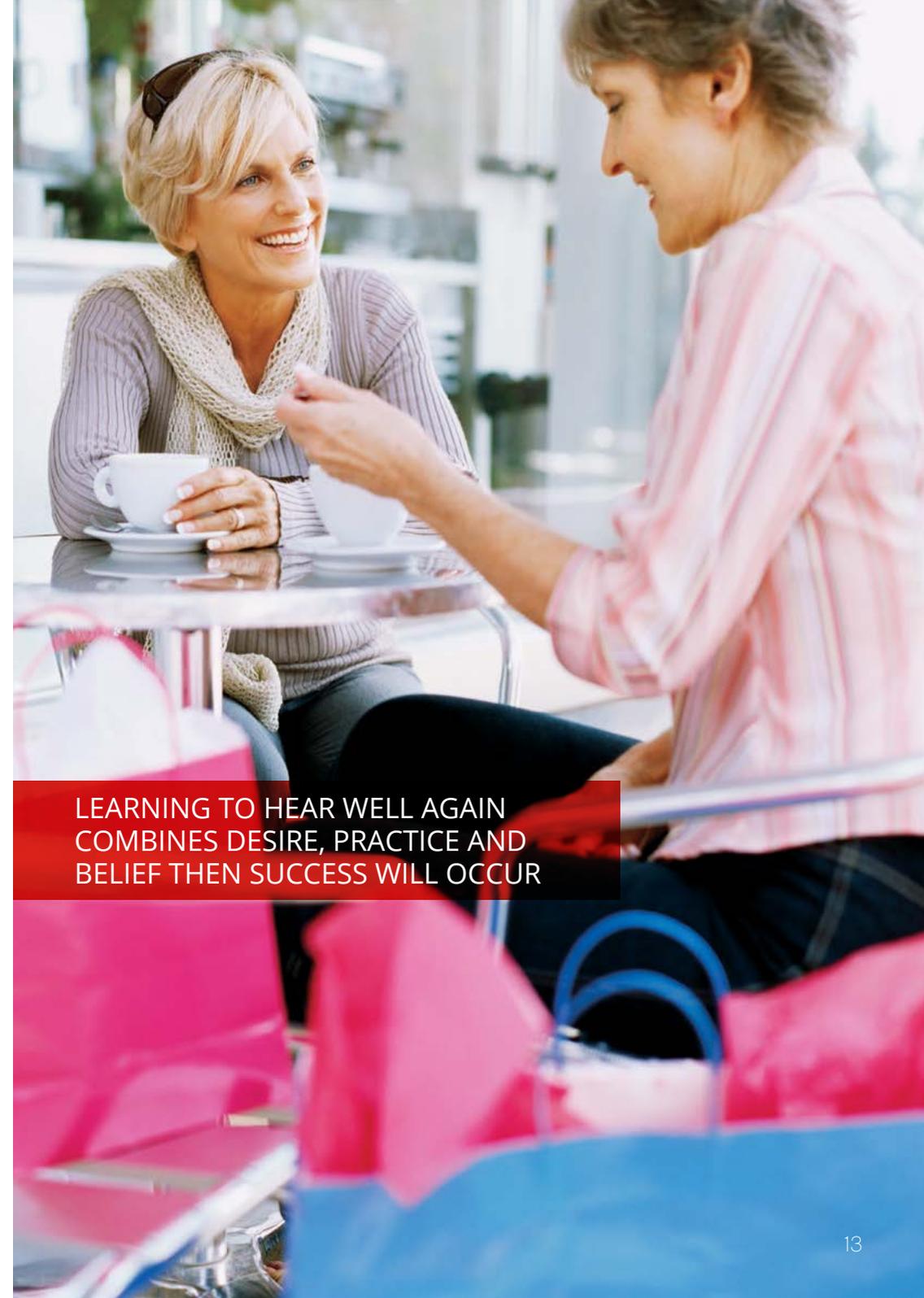
Choosing a hearing device is just the beginning of the journey to better hearing. How quickly you adjust to your hearing instruments depends on how often you wear them. When you first start using your hearing instrument, you will notice an increase in the noise levels around you. This background noise has probably always been there, but with your hearing loss, you might not have noticed these sounds.

It may take a while to get used to hearing sounds being louder than before. As with anything new, it will take time and patience as you adapt to this new way of hearing.

Hearing is only part of how we exchange thoughts, ideas and feelings. Reading lips, facial expressions and gestures can enhance the learning process and supplement what amplification alone may miss. The continued understanding and support of family and friends are crucial as you pursue improved hearing.

The following steps can make communicating easier when you are adjusting to a new hearing device.

- Looking at the person who is speaking and sitting face-to-face in a quiet room
- Minimising distractions; for example, doing dishes at the sink and trying to have a conversation is difficult even for those with normal hearing
- Moving closer to the speaker and within sight
- Trying different locations in a room that has poor acoustics



**LEARNING TO HEAR WELL AGAIN
COMBINES DESIRE, PRACTICE AND
BELIEF THEN SUCCESS WILL OCCUR**

When you use your instruments for the first time, you'll notice that the hearing process feels different. That's because your brain actually has to relearn how to hear sounds - especially the complex range of frequencies in human speech.

The following are observations made by first-time hearing aid wearers:

- It takes time to adjust to wearing hearing instruments.
- Your voice may sound different at first.
- Hearing in situations with background noise should improve, but probably not as much as hearing in quiet places.

This period of adjustment is completely normal. But before long you'll start hearing the sounds you've been missing as well as many you didn't even realise were gone. You might begin to notice sounds you haven't heard for some time, such as the hum of household appliances, or the subtle sounds of nature.

Research suggests that speech comprehension increases over a period of several months after first using a hearing instrument. The longer you wear the device, the clearer and more natural these sounds will become.

There's so much in life that's worth hearing. Spending time adjusting time to your hearing aid is a valuable process which will ultimately allow you to make sure you can appreciate every single sound and enjoy hearing again.



THERE'S SO MUCH MORE IN LIFE
THAT'S WORTH HEARING



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