

Hearing Aid Re-Training Instructions;

Congratulations! You have just taken a very important step in becoming a better listener and communicator. With a little practice, your hearing aids will soon become second nature to you. Your hearing aids are programmed for your specific degree and type of hearing loss. The sounds of speech also contain elements of unwanted environmental sounds such as machine noise or voices in the distance. All of these sounds make up our sound environment. Be patient – it may take some time for you to re-train yourself to hear and to listen more effectively in our noisy world. There are some very important points to keep in mind -

Before leaving the clinic.

Before you leave your Audiologist's office, be sure your hearing aids are comfortable in your ears and that you are able to insert and remove them. Remember RED is for your right ear and BLUE is for your left ear.

Make sure you know how to open the battery compartment, how to put a battery in and remove it. Do you know how long you should expect the battery to last? Be sure you leave with a supply of batteries, and keep extra batteries where you can get them quickly and easily. DO NOT keep batteries in the refrigerator.

The first week.

It is important to begin to wear your hearing instruments in an environment where you feel comfortable – I advise you to begin use at home. Wear them the first day for approximately one hour while conversing with one other person (at a distance of approximately 1 – 2 meters). Begin in a comfortable environment with normal conversation levels of speech only. Do not wear them in a noisy environment until you first become comfortable in quiet. If you hear unfamiliar sounds, try to identify all of them. Do not subject yourself to unusual tasks such as trying to hear a whisper. Your own voice may sound strange at first – remember that this will change in time and it only sounds strange to you. Continue to speak at a level that feels comfortable to you. I recommend reading aloud for 30 minutes each day to help yourself acclimatize to this.

Be sure that you have practiced adjusting the settings of your new hearing aid(s). Not all hearing instruments have manual adjustments - some of the higher technology hearing instruments will do all of the adjustments themselves. Do you know how to adjust the volume control or the pushbutton for memory control?

Be sure to turn your hearing aids off when you are not using them. This will save the battery from draining and avoid any whistling sound. Open the battery door to be sure that the aids are off.

The second week.

Continue to lengthen the time that your hearing aids are worn each day. Remember that television and radio are mechanical reproductions of sound and not all are equal. Ask a family member or a friend to set the volume of TV or radio to a comfortable volume for them, then adjust your hearing aids. With some time and practice you should be able to hear and understand TV and radio without difficulty at a lower volume than prior to hearing aid use.

The third week.

By now you should have some confidence in hearing with your hearing aids. Sounds in your environment should be less “annoying” and your own voice should be more normal sounding to yourself. Begin use of your hearing aids in new and more difficult environments such as restaurants. Pay close attention to the sounds around you.

The fourth week.

Be sure that you are now using your hearing aids consistently. Consistent use is important for improvement in your auditory processing skills which is your “listening” ability. You still may miss some words or parts of conversations. Even those with normal hearing do miss parts of conversation on occasion.

At this point you should begin your Aural Rehabilitation program. This is how you will improve your listening skills. Remember, hearing aids help you to hear better and aural rehabilitation will help you to listen better. Listening is done with our brain while hearing is done by our ears.