

ONE OUT OF SEVEN

individuals does not have full hearing.

ONE OUT OF TEN

individuals hears so poorly that hearing instruments would help.





Welcome

Understanding your hearing condition

The six principles explained within this guide will help you become successful with your hearing instruments. Your commitment to this process will allow you to regain your hearing confidence. If you have any questions or concerns while going through the process, never hesitate to contact our office or your hearing professional. **For your reference, we have listed that information below:**

OFFICE

HEARING PROFESSIONAL'S NAME

TELEPHONE

1 Accept Your Hearing Loss

Your success depends on your attitude

You may have presented yourself as a candidate for hearing instruments for a number of reasons: because of the insistence of a loved one, an embarrassing incident, or a threat to your career. *Accepting your hearing loss is the **first principle** of successful hearing.*

2 Take Initiative and Learn

Your willingness to learn ensures success

Patients who take their own initiative – learning all they can about their loss and actively participating in their treatment plan – do the best. About 80% of how well your hearing instruments work is up to you. *Taking the initiative and learning is the **second principle** of successful hearing.*

3 Aim for Improvement, Not Perfection

Your improvement will be through taking small steps

Once your hearing has diminished you will never hear as you once did. This is true regardless of your hearing loss or type of hearing instruments you purchased. Focus on the percentage of improvement, and be encouraged. *Aiming for improvement, not perfection is the **third principle** of successful hearing.*

4 Learn to Use Your Hearing Instruments

Your dedication will help you achieve success

Patients who achieve success with hearing instruments share a common trait, **dedication**. This skill takes time, practice and persistence; but the results are well worth it. Achieving improved hearing is very important... don't rush the process. *Learning to use your hearing instruments is the **fourth principle** of successful hearing.*

5 Accountability to Your Hearing Professional

Your accountability is crucial to successful hearing

Accountability to your hearing professional is one of the most crucial steps in accomplishing your goal of learning to hear better with hearing instruments. Your hearing professional understands and cares enough that they won't let you give up. *Accountability to your hearing professional is the **fifth principle** of successful hearing.*

6 Help Others to Make the Transition

Your success will inspire others to hear better

Now that you have achieved successful hearing with your hearing instruments, our hope is that you feel inspired to help others who are going through this same experience. *Helping others on their journey is the **sixth principle** of successful hearing.*



Accepting Your Hearing Loss

Your success depends on your attitude

You may have presented yourself as a candidate for hearing instruments for a number of reasons: because of the insistence of a loved one, an embarrassing incident, or a threat to your career. *Regardless of your reason, you have two paths you can take:*

You can *deny* that you have a hearing loss, or
You can *accept* that you have a hearing loss.

Hearing loss is very common. It affects one in two people over the age of 50. It takes some people five to seven years to come to terms with their hearing loss. Valuable time is lost that can affect your friendships, career opportunities, personality, and self-esteem.

FACT

NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRY, YOU CANNOT COVER OR DISGUISE YOUR HEARING LOSS.

Accepting Your Hearing Loss

Characteristics of denial attitude

- “I don’t have a problem; other people don’t speak clearly.”
- “My hearing isn’t that bad.”
- “Time will correct my hearing condition.”
- “I can learn to live with it... I will focus and pay more attention.”
- “If this problem doesn’t improve, then I will go to a hearing professional, and I will certainly know when that time comes.”
- “I only have trouble hearing in loud places; I will avoid places like that.”
- “I really don’t believe my hearing loss is affecting anyone else.”

Your hearing loss is more evident than you think. Most likely loved ones, friends, clients and associates all know you have a hearing condition.

“A good foundation is the most important part of anything worth building. And with hearing rehabilitation, a good attitude is the best foundation.”

Common Signs of Hearing Loss

Constantly increasing the radio and TV volume

Becoming frustrated when engaging in conversation

Asking others to repeat previously spoken conversation

Guessing what others say in conversation

Interpreting words incorrectly because you no longer hear consonant sounds

Magnifying your confusion with facial expressions

Accepting Your Hearing Loss

Taking ownership of your hearing problem

If you deny your hearing loss, you are only making it more difficult on yourself and others. Your hearing ability will continue to decline if left untreated.



The foundation for successful rehabilitation is taking ownership of your hearing loss, confessing to those dearest to you that...

- 1** *Your* hearing loss is permanent.
- 2** *Your* hearing loss affects your way of life.
- 3** *Your* hearing loss is evident to others.
- 4** *Your* best option for your loss is hearing instruments.

A person who accepts their hearing loss will rehabilitate faster than someone who denies they have a problem.

Common Signs of Untreated Loss

Awareness of your hearing loss is the key to understanding

- Withdrawing from social interaction.
- Forming a subconscious habit of asking...“What did he say?”
- Secluding yourself from others to avoid misunderstanding words.
- Placing undue pressure on a relationship because you habitually ask others to repeat.
- Avoiding people and conversations because of your fear.
- Jeopardizing your reputation in your career.
- Gaining an identity as someone who can't hear well.
- Not getting invited to social functions.
- Eventually, giving up and zoning out.

FACT

THE FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESSFUL REHABILITATION
IS TAKING OWNERSHIP OF YOUR HEARING LOSS.

Now that you have come to terms with your hearing loss,
you are ready to go forward.

YES, I AM READY!

YOUR SIGNATURE



Take Initiative and Learn

Your willingness to learn ensures success

Patients who take their own initiative – learning all they can about their hearing loss and actively participating in their treatment plan – do the best. About 80% of how successfully the hearing instruments perform depends on you and your attitude toward treatment.

An attitude of willingness comes from **within you**. You need to have a **desire to learn** and an **eagerness to take the lead in finding the best solution for you**.

SIX CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL PATIENTS

- 1 Positive attitude.
- 2 Willingness to learn.
- 3 Committed to find the best solution.
- 4 Committed to spend time practicing.
- 5 Patience while the brain acclimates to ambient sounds and noises.
- 6 Desire to be a good communicator.

Starting the Process

Satisfaction may not be immediate

As you prepare to start the process, one of the most important facts you need to know is that hearing instruments may not bring immediate satisfaction. To improve your hearing, you must be willing to help your hearing professional achieve your best hearing.

There are going to be highs and lows in this process, but **you must be willing to practice every day**. People who have a desire for improvement have more potential to accomplish their goals. The most successful hearing instrument users will gladly tell you that their effort to learn, and time spent practicing, was the price they paid for better hearing. The choice to have a positive outlook throughout the process is up to **you**.



“ Patients who take initiative, who take an active interest in understanding their hearing loss and their treatment plan, make the fastest transition to hearing instruments. ”

My Hearing Loss

Four specific questions about your hearing loss

Your most useful preparation is education. It is crucial that you become knowledgeable about the specific area that deals with your hearing loss. **After your diagnostic tests, your hearing professional will help get you started by answering these questions:**

What specific type of hearing loss do I have?

- Sensorineural
 Conductive
 Mixed Loss

How severe is the loss of hearing in my left and right ears? Left _____ Right _____

What effects can hearing loss have on my life? _____

What is it that hearing instruments do to improve my hearing? _____



Take Initiative and Learn

Your brain needs time to adjust to consonant sounds

If your hearing loss has been happening progressively over time, your brain has been deprived of certain consonant sounds, meaning you no longer hear at a typical volume level. When you first utilize your hearing instruments, your brain may be shocked by the unfamiliar sounds and may take some time to get reacquainted with these sounds. **As you go through this adjustment, you may find that...**

- 1 Conversational speech does not sound normal.
- 2 Your own voice sounds as if you are in a barrel.
- 3 Hearing instruments seem loud and pick up unwanted sounds.

FACT

HEARING OCCURS IN YOUR BRAIN, NOT IN YOUR EARS.

Your Brain is Remarkable

It adjusts automatically to your environment

Your brain establishes what is normal and what isn't. For example, if you have ever moved from one town to another, at first, your tap water tasted different. But over a short period of time, your brain adjusted to the new flavor, and it became normal.

The same is true with your hearing. If you have ever owned a grandfather clock, you can remember that the first week it awakened you every hour, all night long. But after your brain categorized it, you no longer heard it. This is a result of your brain "recording" the sound and becoming so familiar with the sound that it becomes part of your everyday life.

“With a lot of patience and practice your brain will adjust to new sounds. Sounds you used to hear will once again become familiar and part of your everyday life.”



The First Time May Be Difficult

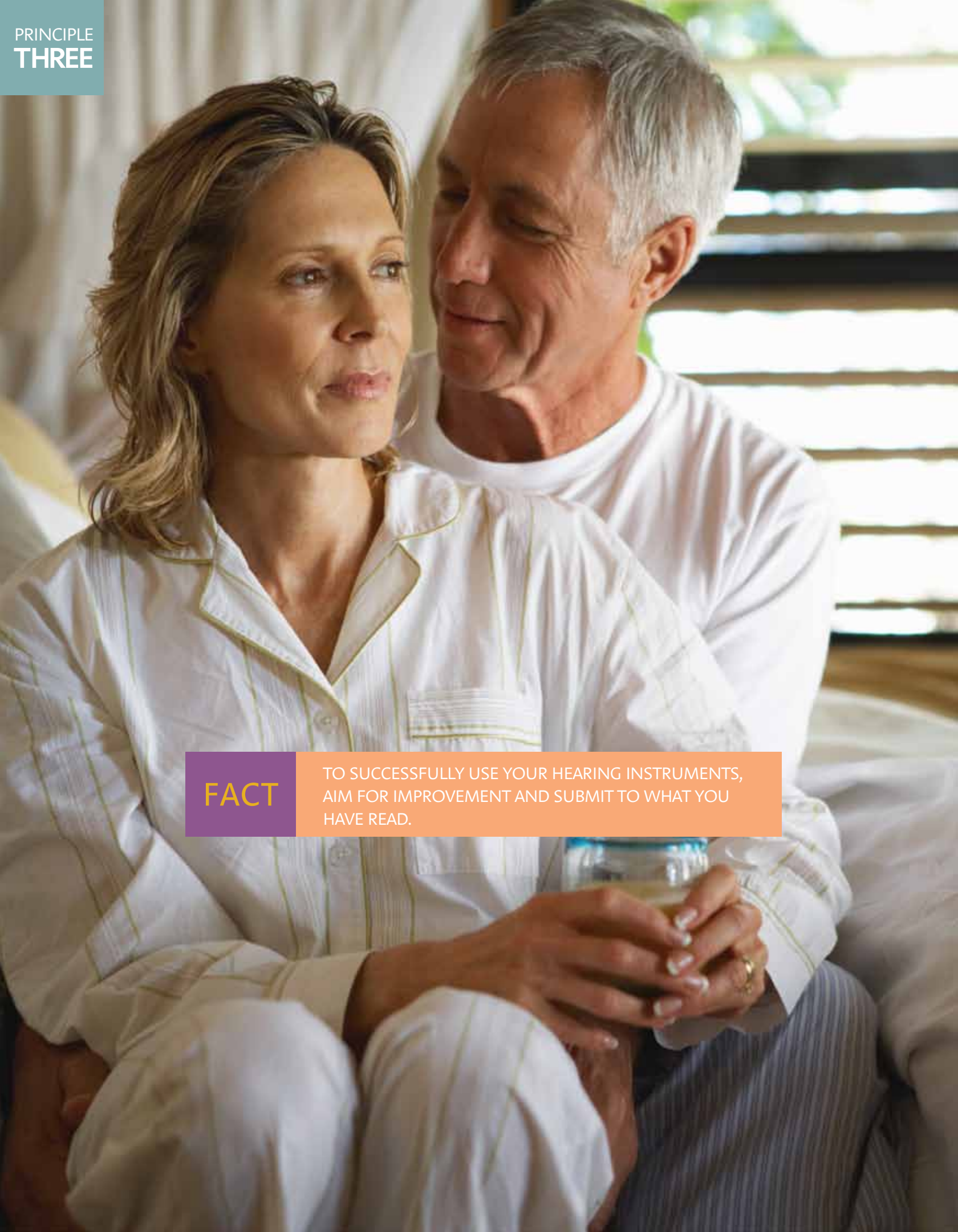
It will take time to adjust and feel normal

Wearing your hearing instruments for the first time may be difficult. When you put your hearing instruments on for the first time, the sounds you will hear may sound small, sharp, artificial, and abnormal. This is a result of your hearing the high-frequency speech and environmental sounds you have been missing.

Your hearing will only improve if you stay committed to your treatment plan until your brain accommodates the new sounds. Your brain will eventually grasp these new changes.

*The human brain
can be trained if
it belongs to a student
who wants to learn.*

—Sir Isaac Newton



FACT

TO SUCCESSFULLY USE YOUR HEARING INSTRUMENTS, AIM FOR IMPROVEMENT AND SUBMIT TO WHAT YOU HAVE READ.

Aim for Improvement, Not Perfection

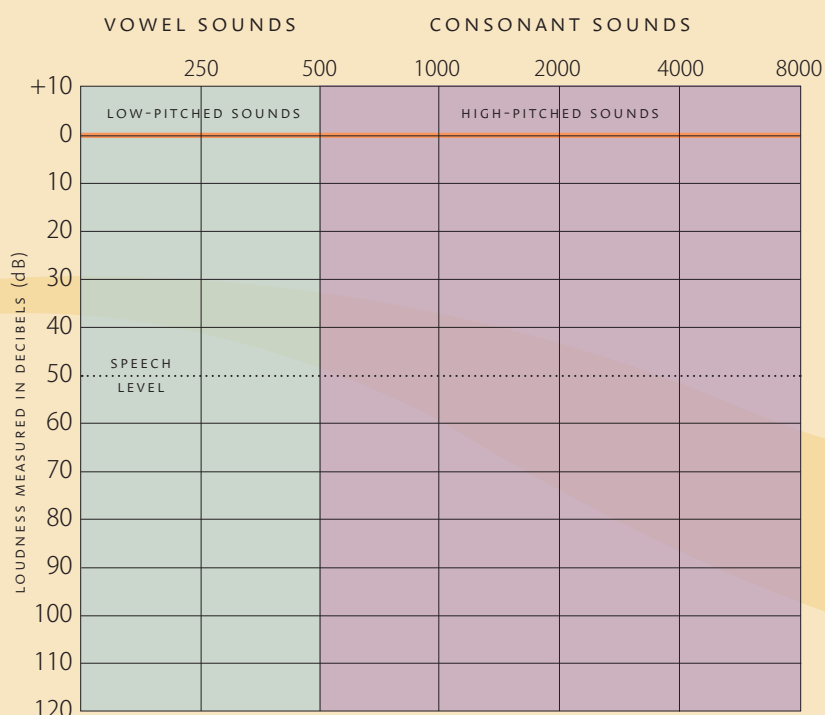
Your improvement will be through small steps

Once your hearing has diminished, you will never hear as you once did. This is true no matter what type of hearing loss you have or the kind of hearing instruments you purchased. Hearing instruments do not restore normal hearing, but provide measurable improvement and allow you to live a fulfilled life.

Life is filled with taking small steps for great improvement. A beginner at any skill level – learning to play the piano, hitting a baseball, or even beginning to walk after a broken leg – isn’t as good as they will be. **Focus on the degree of improvement, and be encouraged.**

“Setting realistic expectations is very important. Patients should celebrate the percentage of their hearing improvement measured against where they heard days before their fitting, even though their hearing will never again reach perfection.”

If you become disappointed, refer to your **Aided** and **Unaided** scores on your audiogram below. As a result of looking back, you can be encouraged how far you’ve come. **Improvement is a day-to-day process.**



Your Pure Tone Audiogram

This graph of your hearing shows the degree of loss in your left and right ears. Your hearing condition has been classified in relationship to “normal hearing.”

- A** symbol = Aided
- symbol = Unaided

Reading Your Audiogram

- Below 25 dB = Normal
- 25 to 40 dB = Mild
- 40 to 55 dB = Moderate
- 55 to 70 dB = Moderately Severe
- 70 to 90 dB = Severe
- Above 90 dB = Profound



Learn to Use Your Hearing Instruments

Your dedication will help you achieve success

All those who achieve success with hearing instruments have a common trait: **dedication**. This skill takes time, practice and persistence, but the results are well worth it. When you stick to the treatment plan and log the appropriate number of hours, as per the instructions of your hearing professional, your brain will acclimate to the corrected sound levels usually within 45 days.

Your ultimate objective should be to wear your hearing devices throughout your everyday routine. In order to achieve improved hearing, it is very important that you don't rush the process.

FACT

YOU MUST WEAR YOUR HEARING INSTRUMENTS CONTINUOUSLY TO ATTAIN MAXIMUM COMFORT.

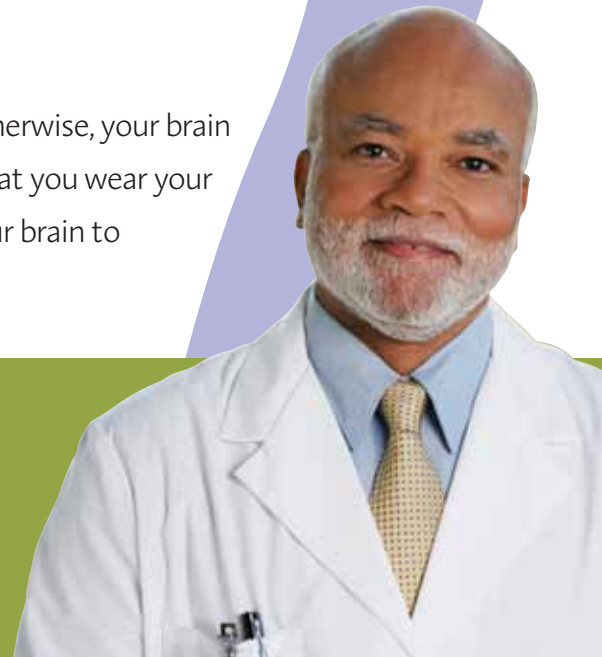
Wear Your Hearing Instruments

Your hearing instruments must become a part of your life

As you complete your training, it is key that putting on your hearing instruments becomes second nature. Your hearing instruments should be put on first thing in the morning and removed before you go to bed at night. It would be a mistake to only wear them in public or on special occasions. Your brain will be overwhelmed by unknown sounds, known as auditory confusion.

It is crucial that the hearing instruments become a part of your life. Otherwise, your brain will never fully adapt to the new and unfamiliar sounds. It is essential that you wear your hearing instruments regularly and without fail because it is vital for your brain to become familiar with these new sounds.

“To gain skill in the use of an instrument requires committed instruction and practice. We commit to provide you with expert instruction, but you must spend time in practice.”



Stay Committed to Your Goal

Your hearing professional will help you stay focused

You must not forget that this takes time. No matter how frustrated you become, **don't quit.** Stay focused on your goal, and if you ever need any help, give your hearing professional a call immediately.

It is your responsibility to stay in touch with your hearing professional should you have any questions or concerns about your hearing instruments. Within the first 30 days, you should come in **three to four times** for a quick appointment to measure your progress and address any difficult situations.



Accountability to Your Hearing Professional

Your accountability is crucial to successful hearing

Accountability is one of the most crucial steps in accomplishing your goal of learning to hear better with hearing instruments. This simply means that *you* will be responsible to discuss your progress with your hearing professional on a frequent basis. This gives your hearing professional the opportunity to give you personal advice and coaching. **There is great value in this relationship because:**

- 1 Your hearing professional is on your side; like a coach, they will not let you fail.
- 2 The hearing professional is specially trained in counseling for the rehabilitation of the human auditory system.
- 3 The hearing professional understands both the physiological and psychological challenges of your hearing loss.
- 4 The hearing professional's ethics and personal values ensure that all conversations are held in strict confidence.

Your Responsibilities

You determine your progress by following these guidelines

- 1 Work toward keeping a positive attitude.
- 2 Follow your hearing professional's instructions and practice all exercises.
- 3 Keep a diary or log of frustrating listening situations and be prepared to discuss these with your hearing professional.
- 4 Call your hearing professional with any problem that frustrates you.
- 5 Attend each follow-up appointment.

“The hearing professional is your accountability partner, a type of personal trainer who won't judge you... someone who understands and cares enough that they won't let you give up.”

The Hearing Professional's Code

Our commitment to your success with hearing instruments

- 1 I will always put the patient first and do my best to provide the best hearing possible.
- 2 I will do my best to give the patient a renewed attitude through successful hearing.
- 3 I will commit to exploring new technologies and procedures to refresh my mastery of hearing rehabilitation.



“To receive freedom from hearing loss brings with it a new responsibility to lead others to freedom.”

Help Others to Hear Better

Your success will inspire others to hear better

Now that you have mastered five of the six principles and become successful with your hearing loss, we hope that you feel inspired to help a friend or a colleague struggling with the same problem. As you look back on your journey to improve your hearing, keep in mind that it would have been very difficult to do on your own. By encouraging someone, you can change a person's outlook on life.

Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal.

—Thomas Jefferson

SIX WAYS TO HELP A FRIEND WITH HEARING LOSS

- 1 Be an encouragement to others who are struggling with their hearing loss.
- 2 Listen for opportunities to help others who may benefit from your knowledge and personal experiences.
- 3 Be ready to give a testimonial about how you regained your sense of hearing.
- 4 Introduce a friend with hearing loss to your hearing professional.
- 5 Help others begin the journey, which starts with your positive comments regarding your hearing help.
- 6 Be available to make suggestions and lead a friend or loved one through the process of obtaining better hearing.

Three Facts You Need to Know

Your friends are more likely to succeed with your help

It's a proven fact that people are more willing to accept advice or firsthand knowledge from someone they know. **Below are three foundational facts that all people with hearing loss share:**

- 1 Those with hearing loss are more willing to accept recommendations from someone who has firsthand experience.
- 2 We all need encouragement from someone who can relate to us.
- 3 The reassurance of a successful hearing instrument user can make the difference between someone seeking help or never meeting with a hearing professional.

WEAR YOUR HEARING INSTRUMENTS FOR _____ HOURS A DAY.

Quiet Environments

Begin in a quiet room in your home.

First become accustomed to your hearing instruments at home before you wear them in a noisy environment. Walk around your home and become familiar with the sounds. Normal sounds such as the clock, computer, microwave and water faucet may have been forgotten because you have not heard them correctly in a while. These sounds are part of your everyday life, and you will get used to them again.

Begin having conversations with your spouse or a loved one.

While doing this, make sure all other distractions are “off,” such as the TV or radio. Face each other and sit no more than seven feet apart. Look at the speaker’s mouth; twenty percent of communication is visual.

Read aloud so you can listen to your own voice.

By doing this you will begin to correct the volume of your voice while wearing the hearing instruments.

Have conversations with a variety of people so you can get used to different speech patterns.

This will help you learn a comfortable volume level for listening. Know that hearing and understanding only improve with time.

If you become tired and uncomfortable with the sounds around you, remove your hearing instruments and take a break. Put them back in a few hours later. Do not rush the process; acclimation takes time.

This is a process. Each day, try to improve by leaving your hearing instruments in a little longer.

Remember, stick with it, and do not wear your hearing instruments all day during this first exercise. **Your success depends on your dedication to improve your hearing.**

Make notes throughout your experience. Be sure to write down any frustrations or unpleasant sounds you are hearing. This will be addressed in your first follow-up visit with your hearing professional.

WEAR YOUR HEARING INSTRUMENTS FOR _____ HOURS A DAY.

Challenging Environments

Start wearing your hearing instruments in challenging settings.

Before beginning this exercise, make sure you have been wearing your hearing instruments at least four hours a day in your home and have become proficient having conversations in quiet environments. Next, begin wearing your hearing instruments outside your home and into more challenging settings.

Increase the distance between you and the person with whom you are visiting.

You may notice that listening becomes more difficult with distance. **You may need to adjust the volume of your instruments when this occurs.**

Begin having conversations with two people in a quiet atmosphere.

This will be very difficult, but stick with it and try to focus on one person at a time. People who have normal hearing also struggle when several people are talking. Having conversations with several people is very difficult, so don't feel discouraged if you have to ask someone to repeat. This is part of the learning process as your brain adjusts to new sounds. With time, these new sounds will become familiar.

As you begin to improve, slowly increase the time spent wearing your hearing instruments.

Wear them on errands, riding in the car or going to the grocery store. As you do this, you will hear more new sounds; try and find from where those sounds originate. By wearing your hearing instruments daily, your brain will adjust to the noises that bothered you and you will soon be able to wear your hearing instruments all day and not need to adjust the volume.

Sit down with your spouse or a friend and watch TV.

Ask them to turn the volume to a comfortable level. Pay close attention to the person speaking. As you watch the speaker, pay attention to the entire story, not the individual words. Practice watching TV and make note of any difficulty you may have; discuss this with your hearing professional.

Continue wearing your hearing instruments, be careful not to wear them too much.

If you become tired, remove them and take a break. Be sure to put them back on later, and don't give up.

WEAR YOUR HEARING INSTRUMENTS FOR _____ HOURS A DAY.

Difficult Environments

Start wearing your hearing instruments in public places.

Now that you are getting used to having conversations with more than one person, wear your hearing instruments to work, social functions and restaurants. These are challenging places to hear, even for people with normal hearing. Be patient and you will begin to develop the skills necessary to hear in the most difficult circumstances.

Continue to increase the distance between you and the speaker.

When ambient noise is present, practice focusing on the speaker's lips and facial expressions. You may hear noises such as clashing of dishes in a restaurant, but learn to focus on the speaker. With practice, your brain will combine the verbal clues with the visual clues to provide you with complete understanding. If you are still having trouble, adjust your hearing instrument's volume, or slightly turn your head toward the speaker.

As you engage in difficult listening settings, make it as easy as possible for yourself.

Sit where you can hear the best. For example, sit in the front of the theater. At a restaurant, select a seat with your back toward the wall so that sounds aren't coming from all directions.

In order to improve your hearing, you must:

- 1 Make your hearing instruments a part of your everyday life.
- 2 Spend the appropriate amount of time wearing them so that they become normal to you.
- 3 Give your brain time to reacclimate to the sounds you have been missing.

Your hearing professional is here to help you and guide you through this process. They want to help you reach improved hearing and live a happier life. If you have concerns or questions, just call.

The office where you were fitted, the telephone number and your hearing professional's name are located on the Quick Reference flap at the front of this guide.

