

Getting used to your hearing aid

Getting started:

To begin with try wearing your hearing aid for short periods, perhaps 30mins - 1 hour. Try using it 2-3 times a day. If this seems too much, try at least once a day.

Start by sitting in a room with soft furnishings - hard surfaces such as you get in kitchens reflect sound and make it sound noisy. Try listening indoors to everyday sounds such as footsteps, doors shutting, the kettle boiling, turning the pages of a newspaper etc. These may sound loud at first but you will gradually get used to them.

Listening to people:

Start by listening to one person about 3-6 feet away. This could be across a table or sitting in an armchair opposite you.

Once you can cope with 1-2-1 conversation, try talking to 2 or more people in a quiet room. It may be several days or even a few weeks before you move on to this situation.

Do not worry about missing some of the conversation but try not to be left out. An occasional reminder that they should not talk too fast may help.

Watching TV:

To begin with, watch programs where there is only one person talking at a time, such as the news. Gradually move on to programs with busier scenes. You may still find it difficult if there is a lot of background music.

It is possible to get a loop system fitted in your home if you still have problems with the TV.

Getting out and about:

Having got used to your aid in the different rooms of your house try using the aids outside.

First try them in a familiar environment such as in your garden or walking up and down your street.

When you are comfortable with this situation try other places such as the shops or a park etc.

Be wary of using your aid too soon in heavy traffic or busy shops, as these situations can often be startling or unpredictable.

Going to meetings and lectures:

These situations can be difficult.

Try to find a seat near the front or near the main speaker.

You may find that there are distracting noises like rustling of papers or whispering. Gradually you will get used to these.

Find out from the organisers if there is a loop system and if so switch your hearing aid to the relevant program.

Going to parties:

Do not expect to understand everything people say - nobody does.

Face the person you are talking to.

Do not be afraid to ask people to repeat what they have said or to speak more slowly.

How much you benefit from your hearing aid will depend quite a lot on you. You will have to practice and be patient. Your family and friends can help but they need to be patient too.