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Your Hearing Aid and You

By having a hearing health care professional fit you for your aids, you've taken the first step toward improving your hearing. Now that you've received your aids, take a few minutes to learn these quick tips that will go a long way to maximize your benefits.

1. Start out on the right foot.

Remember, your goal is to improve your hearing. Unfortunately, a complete return to the hearing of your youth is not likely, so keep your expectations realistic.

2. Listen to your hearing health care professional

Feel free to ask any questions you have during your instruction sessions. Always attend any follow-up sessions or maintenance schedules your professional recommends. If you're having a problem with your hearing aid, make an appointment to have it checked; it may need only a simple adjustment.

3. Read Up!

Just like a camera or other sophisticated piece of equipment, hearing aids provide the best results when used properly. Read the manual thoroughly before using your hearing aid.

4. Be Patient.

Your brain may take while to get accustomed to hearing again. Some insignificant sounds may appear too loud at first, until your brain learns to screen them out in preference for more important sounds. This is completely natural and shouldn't cause concern. Hearing aids are more like contact lenses than glasses; you can't just put them on and expect great results immediately. Rather, you need to adjust to them gradually.

5. Be Consistent.

Hearing aids are not a special occasion dress or suit. For best results, you should wear your aids everyday, in a variety of situations. That's because your brain needs to learn how to process sounds for your hearing aids. If you only wear them occasionally, you're "teasing" your brain and asking it to go back and forth for hearing with and without an aid. While not harmful, you probably won't get the best hearing improvement this way.

6. Take Care of Your Hearing Aids.

Give your hearing aids tender loving care and they'll do the same for you. Your manual contains tips for the best care for your hearing aids, such as keeping them dry and clean at all times. It's also important to keep your ears clean. Ear wax can reduce your hearing aids efficiency or even cause them to malfunction. Cleaning your ears is definitely not a do-it-yourself procedure; check with your hearing health care professional or physician.

7. Educate others.

A new hearing aid affects your loved ones as well as yourself. Your relatives want to communicate with you, so they'll appreciate knowing how to do it. Tell them to look directly at you when they talk and to speak at a normal volume, but a little more slowly than usual. They'll feel better knowing they've enabled you to participate in their conversations and hear their jokes.