Summary

Guide for better Hearing

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Introduction

Getting the most out of your new hearing instruments

This information will help you to get the most from your instruments. It will also help you to supply information to the Hearing Care Professional to assist in fine tuning your new hearing instruments, should this be required.

Wearing hearing instruments for the first time is a psychological as well as a physical process. It is a good idea to talk to the staff at the hearing center about your expectations and experience.

Hearing instruments do not restore perfect hearing! They make sounds louder and help you to make the best of the hearing you have. Remember a hearing loss usually develops slowly over time, getting used to hearing again takes time too. While some immediate benefit is usually noticed, it can take several weeks or even months to learn to enjoy the full benefits of your hearing instruments.
It is important to keep wearing your hearing instruments – do not put them away out of frustration. Maintain communication with your Hearing Care Professional and specialist. The more you tell them about your experience using hearing instruments, the more able they are to help you.

Since hearing instruments amplify all sounds, you will probably notice some sounds you haven’t heard for a while. The sounds of footsteps, chirping birds, rustling paper, etc. This can be over-whelming at first, but once you become adapted to hearing “new” sounds, they should become part of the background with time. The process of getting used to your hearing instruments usually takes a few weeks but this may vary from person to person. In addition, the amount of benefit depends upon the severity of your hearing loss, your general health, how long the hearing loss has been present and if you are a first time or experienced hearing instrument user.

Most importantly, your hearing success will depend upon you! Getting the most out of your instruments requires practice, patience and perseverance. Remember to work closely with your Hearing Care Professional and this will ensure maximum benefits.
Getting started

During the first couple of weeks, it is best to proceed gradually by wearing your new hearing instruments in your home environment. Use them for a few hours each day for conversation and/or television. If they seem too soft, see if any of the solutions on page 20–23 can help. If not, consult your Hearing Care Professional.

Once you are able to use the hearing instruments for several hours without becoming tired, begin wearing them in more varied situations.

The first sound to become used to is the sound of your own voice. You may notice that your voice sounds too loud. If the voices of others are at a comfortable level, it may be that you have been speaking loudly to compensate for your hearing loss. So practice speaking at a more comfortable level.

Finding the optimal settings for your hearing instruments is usually an ongoing process during which you must play an active role. After some initial practice you should return to your Hearing Care Professional for fine-tuning of your hearing instruments. If certain sounds seem too loud or too soft, your hearing instruments can be adjusted until they are more comfortable for you.
Making progress

As you become used to the sound of the hearing instruments, they can be used in more challenging listening situations and for longer periods of time. The following situations are suggestions for using the instruments under progressively more difficult conditions:

- conversation with a small group in a quiet situation
- conversation with one or two people in a noisy situation
- in church
- on the telephone
- at meetings
- conversation with a group in a noisy situation
- conversation at a club or restaurant
- in a shopping center
- on the street with traffic

Talk to other people who use hearing instruments. They will most likely have many experiences to share with you.

Remember that people with good hearing also experience difficulties understanding speech in noisy conditions.
Tips for better hearing in difficult listening situations

Dining out:
• Select a quiet restaurant (preferably without music or entertainment).
• Request a table in a quiet area at a distance from the kitchen.
• Sit where there is good lighting.
• Ensure that light is not shining directly in your eyes.
• Conversation will be easier to follow if the group is small.

In the car:
• If one ear is better than the other sit with your better ear toward the center of the car.
• If using two hearing instruments, consider reducing the volume of the instrument closest to the window.
• Turn off the radio/stereo system.
• Keep the windows closed to minimize traffic, road and wind noise.

Attending theater, concerts or movies:
• When purchasing tickets, inquire if a loop, infrared or FM system is available. If not, request preferential seating.
• Make every effort to become familiar with the program in advance – this will make it easier to follow the plot should the sound quality be poor.

**Attending lectures or meetings:**
• Inquire if a loop is available. If not, sit towards the front.
• If hearing is similar in both ears, sit in the middle.
• If one ear is much better than the other, sit with your better ear toward the sound source.

**At work:**
• You will be more comfortable informing others about your hearing loss. They will be more likely to assist you in understanding conversations.
• Teach coworkers to talk clearly and keep eye contact when conversing.
• Focus on the person nearest you.
• If you hear only part of a conversation repeat what you have heard and ask for the missing information.
• Do not try to keep up with a conversation if it is impossible. Make demands, but be understanding.
At home:
• Always use your hearing instruments.
• Inform family and friends about your situation.
• Teach your family to talk clearly and keep eye contact when conversing.
• Teach your family how to involve you in conversations.
• Avoid background noise.

Hearing on the telephone:
• Hold the receiver close to the microphone inlet of your hearing instrument. If this causes whistling move the receiver away a small distance or consult your Hearing Care Professional.
• Do not rest the receiver on the hearing instrument as this may make the instrument whistle.
• If voices over the telephone are too soft or if background noises are a problem, you may use a telecoil (be aware that not all telephones are compatible with telecoils).
• If you have a Behind-the-Ear hearing instrument with a telecoil, activate it and hold the phone behind the ear, next to your hearing instrument.
• If you have an In-the-Ear hearing instrument with a telecoil, place the telephone receiver next to your hearing instrument.
• If you have an instrument, without a M/T-Switch check with your Hearing Care Professional as to whether your hearing instrument can be fitted with a telecoil.
• Depending on the instruments, telecoil function may also be switched ON/OFF with a remote control.
• For people with greater degrees of hearing loss, a volume control on the telephone may be necessary. Request further advice from your hearing care professional.
• With the hearing instrument in telecoil mode, digital mobile phones might cause interference. In this case the microphone mode (M) will give a better hearing result.

Mobile telephones:
• Digital mobile telephone systems may cause electrical interference in hearing instruments, therefore always remember to test the mobile telephone before purchasing it. To test, take the telephone to an area where it is receiving and transmitting at full power (you can see this on the display of the mobile telephones). Interference varies, depending on a number of factors, such as the model of telephone and the type and model of hearing instrument.
**Tips for communicating with hearing impaired people**  
*(Suggestions for family members and friends)*

- Speech should be clear and distinct. Some people may need to slow down a little but if speech is too slow it can be even more difficult to understand.
- Do not shout! Many people with hearing impairment are very sensitive to loud sounds.
- If you are having difficulty being understood, rephrase the statement rather than repeating the same words several times.
- Do not try to have a conversation from another room or with your back turned. Talk face to face!
- Avoid eating, drinking or smoking while talking and keep your hands away from your face.
- Minimize background noise – turn off the TV or radio or move to a quiet area for conversation.
- Try to give some warning when the topic changes during group conversations – it is much easier to follow the conversation when you know what is being discussed.
- Ensure there is good light on your face – the eyes and ears work best together for maximum understanding of speech.
• Encourage those with hearing instruments to wear them as often as possible.
• Most of all, be patient and understanding. Even when wearing hearing instruments, many people will still not hear or understand everything the first time.

*If you have additional questions please contact your Hearing Care Professional.*

*Care of your hearing instruments*

It is important that you maintain and handle your hearing instruments with care. Proper handling is important: firstly, to maintain proper functioning of the hearing instruments and secondly, to insure high hygiene standards. Proper daily cleaning and regular service will increase the longevity of your hearing instruments and ensure that they perform optimally.

• When handling your hearing instruments, keep them over a soft surface to avoid damage if you accidentally drop them.
• Keep your hearing instruments clean. Wipe them regularly with a dry cloth or tissue.
• Remove ear wax as this may cause temporary malfunction or a complete breakdown. Ear wax also collects dirt.
• Avoid getting your hearing instruments wet (e.g. wearing them in the shower or heavy rain). If your hearing instruments have been exposed to moisture or very humid conditions, it is recommended to place them (after removal of the batteries) in a dry storage kit to remove any moisture which may be inside them.

• Never attempt to dry your hearing instruments with a hair dryer, in the microwave oven or with other devices that are not made for this specific purpose.

• Chemicals in cosmetics such as aftershave lotion, hairspray, oil, perfume and even mosquito repellent can have detrimental effects on your hearing instruments. You should always remove your hearing instruments before applying such products and allow time for the product to dry before wearing your hearing instruments.

• Your hearing instruments should never be exposed to extreme heat. Do not leave them in the glove box of your car.

• When not wearing your hearing instruments, keep them in their presentation case, to protect them from damage.
Behind-the-Ear Hearing Instruments only

If you have programmable hearing instruments, the programming cover should never be removed as dust and dirt can cause defects in the programming plug.

Care of your earmolds
The earmolds are an integral part of your hearing instruments and should be kept clean and free from ear wax at all times.

Cleaning your earmolds
Disconnect the earmold from the earhook by gently pulling it off. Some types of earmolds connect/disconnect at the juncture of the earmold tubing and the earmold itself. Check yours carefully. Gently clean the earmold in warm soapy water or with a special cleaning kit for at least 15–30 minutes. Remove the earmold from the solution and allow it to dry completely before reconnecting it to the hearing instrument.

Be careful never to put your hearing instruments in the cleaning liquid.
It is best to use an airpuffer to remove the remaining cleaning liquid and to dry the sound and ventilation holes.

Re-attach the earmold to the hearing instrument with care, assuring that it is positioned correctly. If you are uncertain or have questions about the procedure for cleaning the earmold, please consult your Hearing Care Professional.
Cleaning the Thin Sound Tube System

If you have a Behind-the-Ear instrument with a thin sound tube, make sure that the tube and earpiece is kept clean and free from ear wax at all times.

1. Disconnect the sound tube from the hearing instrument by twisting and pulling it off. Always wash your hands before manipulating the tube.

2. Use a soft dry cloth or tissue to clean the outside of the adapter, sound tube and dome.

3. To remove wax from the sound tube, insert the cleaning floss into the sound tube at the connector end. Push the cleaning floss all the way through the sound tube until it comes out through the dome.

4. Once wax is removed, reattach the sound tube connector onto the hearing instrument.

Important
To avoid blocking the sound tube, do not clean the sound tube or dome in water.
In-the-Ear Hearing Instruments only

Cleaning the WaxBuster

The sound outlet is an integral part of your hearing instrument and should be kept clean and free from ear wax at all times.

- Wipe the hearing instrument with a dry soft cloth. Carefully wipe away traces of wax on the WaxBuster.
- Place the tip on a dry soft cloth over a smooth surface. Gently press the WaxBuster and drag the hearing instrument across the cloth. Ask your Hearing Care Professional to demonstrate this if you are unsure.
- If in doubt about the use or replacement of your wax protection system contact your Hearing Care Professional.
- Clean your hearing instruments with the small brush or the soft cloth provided with the hearing instruments. Do not insert tools into the sound outlet. This could damage the receiver. If you cannot clean the hearing instruments completely, it is best to contact your Hearing Care Professional.
Using the NoWax

NoWax helps to maintain the advanced performance of your hearing instrument.

Carefully follow these instructions when changing the wax filter:

• Make sure that the NoWax filter is placed correctly, before inserting the hearing instrument in your ear.
• The NoWax filter is not a toy and should be kept out of reach of children and anyone who might swallow or otherwise cause themselves injury.
• If the NoWax filter should accidentally work itself loose from the hearing instrument, please contact your Hearing Care Professional, – do not try to remove the filter yourself.
• Always inspect your NoWax filter before using the hearing instrument to ensure that it has not become detached from the instrument.

The filter should be changed:

When you can see that the filter is clogged or when the hearing instrument does not sound normal.

Fully disposable

NoWax is made from environmentally friendly material, making it easy to discard after use. The material is reduced to oxygen and water when incinerated.
How to use NoWax

1. Remove the tool from the shell. The tool has two arms, one with the new filter and one with the removal tool.

2. Push the removal tool into the old waxfilter and remove the used filter from the hearing instrument.

3. Push the new filter into the hearing instrument.

4. Throw out the used tool.

Be aware that you need to check and clean your hearing instrument daily, in addition to using NoWax.
### Common problems and their solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Possible cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Whistling or squealing | • The hearing instrument is not inserted properly  
          • Ear wax accumulation in ear canal  
          • The sound tube is not connected to the instrument properly  
          • If you have a BTE the earmold tubing could be split  
          • Your hearing instrument, (for BTE, your earmold) is too loose |
| Instrument is too soft or a humming noise occurs | • The hearing instrument may be in telecoil position (only for instruments with T-coil)  
          • Volume is too soft (Only for instruments with loudness control) |
| No volume or volume too soft | • The hearing instrument is not turned on  
          • Dead battery or battery is inserted the wrong way  
          • Blocked sound outlet |
**Solution**

- Re-insert your hearing instrument. If you wear a BTE, re-insert the earmold.
- Have your ear canal examined by your physician.
- Re-attach the sound tube or exchange it with a new tube.
- Have your earmold tubing replaced by your Hearing Care Professional.
- Consult your Hearing Care Professional.

- Check switch position.
- Turn up the loudness control on your hearing instrument.
- Check if the instrument is turned on.
- Check that the battery is working and inserted the right way.
- Check that the sound outlet is not blocked. For BTE hearing instruments: the tubing and sound outlet of the earmold must also be clean. For ITE hearing instruments: clean sound outlet or replace wax protection system.
## Common problems and their solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Possible cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No volume or volume too soft</strong></td>
<td>• Battery contacts dirty or corroded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ear wax accumulated in the ear canal, or change of hearing loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Blocked sound inlet (microphone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The hearing instrument may be in telecoil position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whirring noise, fading, weak or “motor boating” sounds</strong></td>
<td>• Dirty or corroded battery contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Moisture in hearing instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dead battery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instrument switches from on to off periodically</strong></td>
<td>• Low battery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Solution

- Open and close the battery door several times or clean the battery contacts carefully with a dry soft Q-tip
- **Consult your Hearing Care Professional**
  Your ear canal may be blocked with ear wax, your hearing instrument may need adjustment or your hearing may have changed
- **Consult your Hearing Care Professional**
  Do not try to clean this yourself
- **Check the switch position**

- Open and close the battery door several times or clean the battery contacts carefully with a soft Q-tip. Clean the battery surface with a dry cloth or tissue
- **Place hearing instrument in dry aid kit (remove battery first)**
- **Consult your Hearing Care Professional**
- Replace battery with a new one
- **Replace battery with a new one**
Service

Common problems and their solutions, are listed on pages 20–23. If none of the actions, listed on the above pages, solve the problem, contact your Hearing Care Professional.

Do not attempt to repair your hearing instruments yourself.

Accessories

Bernafon offers a wide range of accessories. Depending on hearing instrument types and local regulations, the following accessories are available:

- Remote Controls for hearing instruments
- Different Systems for FM Communication (for wireless transmission of signals from external devices to the hearing instrument)
- Audio Input Systems for connection with external devices (e.g. TV)
- Wax Protection Systems
- Battery Compartment Lock Systems
- Cleaning and Drying Kit
- Adapters for Eyeglasses

For further information on accessories please contact your Hearing Care Professional.