

Spring Update

Say What?

Communication Strategies: What Your Conversation Partners Can Do for You

Hearing aids provide amplification and contain technology that helps to diminish some of the negative effects of background noise. However, they do not eliminate the importance of effective communication skills. Even with the use of hearing aids, it is necessary for your conversation partners to follow some key communication strategies in order to make communicating easier for you.

One strategy is called Clear Speech. Using Clear Speech can result in a spoken message that is precise, accurate and fully formed. This allows you, the hearing aid wearer to more closely and easily follow the conversation. Clear speech is defined as:

- Accurate and fully formed
- Naturally slower
- Naturally louder
- Lively, with a full range of intonation and stress on key words with pauses between all phrases and sentences.

Other communication tips you can offer to your conversation partners include:

- Ask them to face you while talking
- Ask them to move closer and sit or stand in the light to make their facial expressions and lips easier for you to see
- Remind them not to talk while chewing
- Suggest that they not “hide” behind a newspaper or lean their cheek or chin on their hand while talking
- Ask them to try rephrasing the sentence rather than just repeating
- Avoid conversations in doorways and near windows
- Ask them to move to a room that does not produce a lot of echoes.

A few key changes in communication can positively impact your interactions with those around you. The combination of hearing aids and these communication strategies is exactly what is needed to improve your ability to effectively follow a conversation.

Information adapted from Oticon’s “Communication is a Two Way Street” and “Your New Life Starts Now” pamphlets.



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Music To Our Ears

Northwestern University scientists recently discovered that a lifetime of musical training slows some aspects of age-related hearing loss. The study is the first to provide biological evidence that lifelong musical experience has an impact on the aging process.

In this study, researchers in the Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory discovered that older musicians had a distinct advantage when it came to decoding or understanding speech sounds. This was determined by measuring the automatic brain responses of younger and older musicians and non-musicians to speech sounds. The older musicians not only outperformed their older non-musician counterparts, they decoded the sound stimuli as quickly and accurately as the younger non-musicians.

Previous studies have also suggested that musical training offsets losses in memory and difficulties hearing speech in noise—two common complaints of older adults. These studies reinforce the idea that how we actively experience sound over the course of our lives has a profound effect on how our nervous system functions.

Reference: Nauert PhD, R. (2012) Music Training May Delay Hearing and Memory Loss. *Psych Central*.

Milwaukee Walk4Hearing

The Walk4Hearing is scheduled for **Saturday, June 9, 2012** and is to help raise money and awareness for both national and local programs and services for people with hearing loss and their families.

Location: Veteran's Park
1010 N. Lincoln Memorial Dr.
Milwaukee, WI

Registration: 9:00 am
Walk start time: 10:00 am

Website: www.walk4hearing.org



