South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Introduction to your hearing aids

We hope you are happy with your new hearing aid(s). At the fitting appointment your Audiologist will have instructed you on how to use, care for and get used to your hearing aid. This fitting pack aims to refresh and build on the information covered during your hearing aid fitting.

Getting used to the hearing aid

The following are common things you may notice when first wearing your hearing aid:

My own voice sounds strange - One's own voice does sound different through hearing aids because you are now hearing your voice through external microphones in the hearing aids. It should, though, be entirely bearable and you should find that the more you wear the hearing aids the less strange it sounds.

You may experience an echo sensation of your own voice; this is because you have a physical object in your ear and it should settle down within a few days. However, if this does not settle down or if the hearing aids make your own voice rattle in your head to such an extent that it is impossible to wear the aids, then please contact us to make an appointment to see an audiologist.

It sounds tinny – Hearing loss often affects our hearing of high-pitched sounds. Therefore hearing aids often amplify high- pitched sounds more so than anything else. Although these high pitches can sound tinny initially they will improve the clarity of speech and appear less harsh over time.

Background or incidental sounds are loud - You will be able to hear lots of incidental, background sounds that you may not have heard for a long time. Your brain will initially be very aware of these sounds. The more you wear your hearing aid and expose your brain to these sounds, it will be less noticeable. A

person with normal hearing will also hear these sounds but their brain is able to ignore them as they hear them every day.

Acclimatising to your hearing aid/s

Acclimatisation is the process in which your brain gets used to the sound of your hearing aid. This process can take up to 12 weeks. The more you expose your brain to hearing with your hearing aid the quicker you will get used to it.

Sounds like the kettle boiling, the toilet flushing, the fridge humming and paper rustling may sound very loud initially. Your brain may not have heard these sounds at this level for a long time. It will need to re-learn what's important and what's not, before being able to ignore these sorts of sounds. Like any other learning, this task will require some commitment.

You are advised to build up the use of your hearing aid gradually, both in the hours per day and the noisiness of the situations. On the first day, wear it for at least an hour in a quiet situation, for example, at home. Gradually increase the length of time you wear your aid/s each day until you are wearing it all the time at home and in quiet situations. Then, begin to wear it in noisier situations. The following page shows Situations To Experience and Practice (STEP).

Eventually you will build up use until you are able to put your hearing aid in in the morning and leave it in until you go to bed at night. It should be comfortable enough to wear all day. If it is not, refer to the "how to insert your hearing aid section" and make sure you are inserting the hearing aid correctly.

You will gain the most benefit from your hearing aid when you are wearing it all day.

It is likely to take patience and perseverance on your part when getting used to your hearing aid. If you stop wearing your hearing aid regularly it is likely to seem strange again when you put it back in.

So don't give up, stay positive and try to persevere. Once you adjust to the sound of your hearing aid you will receive the full benefit of it and manage better in group conversations and background noise.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

One STEP at a Time
Situations To Experience and Practice

You will get the most out of your new hearing aids if you practice using them in certain situations around the home before you progress to situations that are more difficult. If these sounds strange for the first time don't be discouraged, your brain has the ability to re-learn with repeated experiences.

Try to wear your hearing aids in the following situations in roughly the order shown:

1. Listening to one other person at home while you can see his/her face
2. Listening to a TV or radio at home
3. Walking around inside your home, trying to recognise any sounds you can hear
4. Listening to one other person at home while you are not looking at their face
5. Listening to music
6. Listening to your own voice while you read aloud from a newspaper or book
7. Conversing with 2/3 people in a quiet place
8. Walking around outside, trying to recognise any sounds you can hear
9. Shopping or talking to another person in a noisy place
10. Conversing with 2/3 people in a noisy place
11. Conversing in a large gathering or at a noisy restaurant

Hearing aids have both benefits and limitations

Your hearing aid aims to improve your ability to hear speech and everyday sounds.

Your hearing aid will not give you perfect hearing; it is purely an aid helping you to make the most of the hearing you have.

Remember to be realistic about what your hearing aid can do.

There may still be some situations where you may have difficulty such as in noisy/crowded places. This situation is also difficult for people with normal hearing as background sounds can overpower speech.

Consider where you are seated when in these situations. Try to keep background noise *behind* you and whoever you wish to hear *in front* of you. This is because the hearing aid is most sensitive to what is in front and least sensitive to what is behind.

If you feel the hearing aids are not benefiting you, please contact us and make an appointment to see an audiologist.

The Loop System/Telecoil

Loop systems are found in most public places including banks, post office, church, theatre and cinemas. You will see this "T" symbol displayed in areas that have the loop system.



They are designed to help you hear the speaker more clearly across distances by transferring the sound directly to the hearing aid. It can be beneficial for those with very severe hearing loss.

If you would like the loop activated on your hearing aid/s, please make an appointment to see an Audiologist.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Using your hearing aid whilst on the Telephone

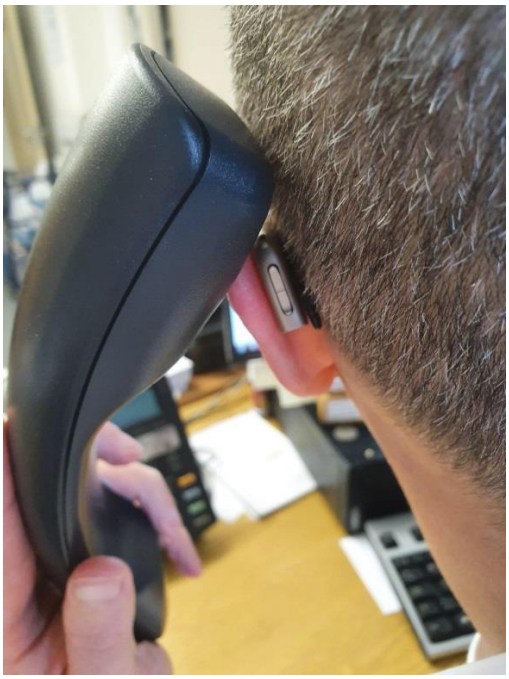
Leave your hearing aid in place on the setting that you would use to pick up ordinary everyday sounds.

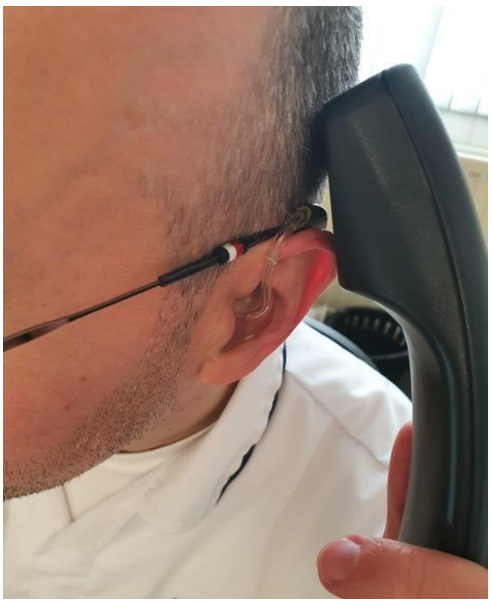
Rather than holding the telephone to the opening of your ear, you might find it more beneficial to hold it close to the top of your hearing aid. This is where the microphones are. Please see the below pictures to help you.

If you are experiencing feedback (whistling), you may be holding the phone too close to the hearing aid.

You will need to experiment to find a position that suits you best. If possible, get a family member or friend to ring you so you have time to experiment and practice.

An alternative is to use the speaker phone on the telephone so that the sound is coming into both hearing aids together.





South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Wearing Glasses with your hearing aid

Many thousands of people across the UK successfully wear hearing aids and glasses together. We recommend you put your hearing aid/s on first. Then slide your glasses on closest to your head so that the temple tips/ear piece of your glasses sits sandwiched between your head and your hearing aid. Do not stretch the glasses to the outside of the hearing aid as this may damage your glasses and block the hearing aid microphones.

If you are having difficulty sitting your hearing aid alongside your glasses, please contact us and we can help you. We may make an appointment to check the fitting. A simple adjustment to the tubing may be all that is required. You may also be advised to visit your optician to ensure that your glasses frames have not stretched over time and are sitting properly against your head.





Hearing Aid Battery Safety

As hearing aids continue to shrink in size, their batteries have also. Small “button” batteries can easily be swallowed by children or pets, or even adults accidentally. Hearing aid batteries are made up of various metals and chemical compounds that can result in serious and sometimes life-threatening injuries if swallowed.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Safety Tips

- Keep hearing aids and batteries out of reach and out of sight, especially of children. Never let a child play with a hearing aid or its battery
- If required, we can put locks on hearing aids where the battery is kept. Be sure these are in the "lock" position when the person wears the hearing aids. If you think a battery door lock is required, please contact us
- When you handle batteries, work over a towel. If you drop the hearing aid battery, it will be easier to find and to retrieve. If you drop it onto a hard surface, the battery is likely to bounce and end up on your floor. A child may find it
- Never put your hearing aids or its batteries on a table where you put food or drinks. If you or a child are distracted and not paying attention, it can easily be picked up accidently
- If you store batteries in your purse, keep them separate from any other medication you may carry
- Dispose of used batteries immediately. Flat batteries can still be dangerous
- If you suspect a person or a pet has swallowed a hearing aid battery it is imperative that you act immediately and attend your nearest A&E department or vet, in the case of a pet. Do not eat or drink if battery ingestion is suspected
- Tell others about the risk associated with button batteries and how to keep them safely stored

The hearings aids remain the property of the NHS, should they not be required please return them to the local audiology services

If you have any problems with your new hearing aids that are not addressed in your fitting pack please contact us on:-

Telephone 90561307