



Finding the Right Hearing Solution





Contents

Doing what is right for your hearing 4

What you can look forward to 5

How do hearing instruments work? 6

Styles to suit every taste 8

Physical factors to consider 12

Which personal factors are important?..... 14

Your next step 18

Doing what is right for your hearing

A hearing loss is like any other important health-related issue; it must not be neglected. It needs to be taken seriously and professionally diagnosed, and it should be treated with the best solutions available.

Treating hearing loss has been proven to have a positive impact on quality of life. In addition to helping you HEAR better, hearing instruments can help you FEEL better. You can expect a major boost in self-

confidence; your wellbeing will increase as your energy levels surge, and life will take a turn for the better!

Finding the right hearing solution starts with gaining an overview of what instrument styles are available, what benefits they offer, and how they are likely to help in situations you find important. And that is what this booklet is all about.



What you can look forward to

People are often surprised to see that today's hearing instruments look nothing like their predecessors. The "big beige bananas" of the past have been replaced by elegant models that look as good as any other modern communication accessory.

In fact, technology has advanced so quickly that design-wise, the dividing line between ordinary headphones and high-tech hearing instruments has become more

blurred. Today, most people are meeting new hearing solutions with an open mind, which makes wearing them so much easier!

As well as being neat and discreet, today's hearing instruments promise easy, comfortable listening. They can never totally restore your hearing, but they can certainly help you hear better.



Did you know that Oticon is a true pioneer in hearing instrument design? The company is a multiple winner of the prestigious international "Red Dot Design Award" with creations that were rated "Best of the best" in the product design category.

(Source: <http://en.red-dot.org/>)



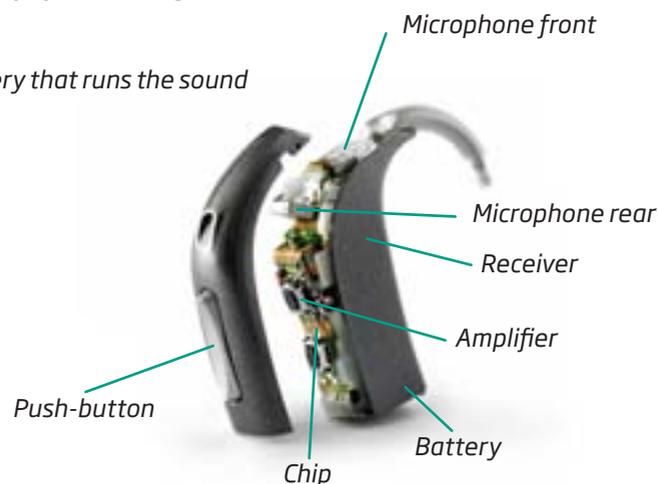
reddot design award

How do hearing instruments work?

Today's advanced instruments are small and enhance sounds so you can hear much better. While there are many different types and levels of powerful sound processing technologies, five basic components are common to them all:

- *Microphones that pick up sound.*
- *An amplifier that makes it louder.*
- *A loudspeaker (receiver) that sends amplified sound into the ear.*
- *An ultra-small chip that processes the sound to fit your hearing needs.*
- *A tiny battery that runs the sound processors.*

The hearing instrument shells may or may not look alike, but it is the technology inside you are paying for. Imagine the impact a great set of hearing instruments could have on your daily life! You would be able to respond more naturally and communicate more freely with family and friends. And get maximum pleasure out of your favourite pastimes.



Three performance levels

Generally speaking there are three performance levels of hearing instruments: Essential, Advanced and Premium. Which performance level you choose will depend on your hearing, listening needs, lifestyle, personal preferences and budget. The different types process loud sounds and quiet sounds in different ways.

What you need...

Essential hearing instruments are designed to make speech easier to hear.

What you would like...

Advanced instruments shape the sound even more closely to fit your needs. Because these automatically adapt to changes in your environment, listening becomes even easier, particularly when it is noisy.

...What you deserve

Premium solutions offer the richest, most natural sound quality imaginable. Some even use wireless technology to keep your sound picture as true-to-life as possible. Wherever you go, with these at your side, you will feel completely tuned in to what is going on around you.

Did you know that it is not our ears that do the listening, but our brain? Our ears capture the sounds, but it is the brain that recognises and interprets them. That is why it is vital to be able to hear the widest range of sounds as clearly as possible.

Styles to suit every taste



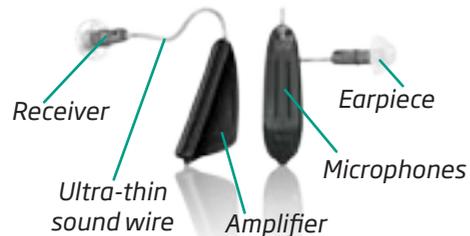
Your hearing care professional carries a broad range of instruments – from the most simple to the most advanced. Together you can discuss the pros and cons of the various models before deciding which one is best for you.

Contemporary, Receiver-in-the-Ear (RITE)

Suitable for all kinds of hearing loss, RITE is fast becoming the most popular style of hearing instrument. It is lightweight, very small and nearly invisible – a major bonus. And the colours, which range from subtle to bold and trendy makes these solutions very cosmetically appealing.

This style is also easy on the ear, for two reasons:

- *The sound travels in a less noticeable, ultra-thin sound wire straight into a receiver sitting inside your ear, which means even clearer and more natural sound quality.*
- *The earpiece has a better fit and does not totally block your ear, so it is more comfortable and easy to wear.*



Classic, Behind-the-Ear (BTE)

Over time, BTEs have become smaller and more elegant. They come in various sizes, the smallest being the Mini BTE. The electronics are housed in a case behind the ear, and the sound is sent through a tube into a custom earpiece that is tailor-made to fit perfectly.

BTEs come in a variety of colours including neutral colours to match your hair or skin tone. The larger ones can accommodate a larger battery and amplifier, making them perfect for children and adults who need a more powerful instrument.



BTE



BTE

Styles to suit every taste



Custom-built hearing instruments

Custom hearing instruments are individually tailored to fit the contours of your ear. Whether these are suitable for you will depend on your hearing loss and the size of your ear canal. Crafted in skin-tone colours, these instruments come in various sizes.

In-the-Ear (ITE), In-the-Canal (ITC) and Completely-in-the-Canal (CIC) styles are useful if you want one piece per ear only. Some people doing sports find them more practical. Functionality-wise they can be rather limited compared to Receiver-in-the-Ear (RITE) and Behind-the-Ear (BTE) instruments due to lack of space in the ear.



ITE



ITC



CIC

In-the-Ear (ITE)

In ITEs, all of the components are housed in a shell that sits snugly in the visible part of your ear, so there are no wires to contend with. ITEs are easier to insert than smaller, In-the-Canal instruments, and the larger battery makes them suitable even for moderately severe hearing losses.

In-the-Ear (ITE)



In-the-Canal (ITC) & Completely-in-the-Canal (CIC)

These sit in the ear canal, making them virtually invisible. Performance-wise, they suit mild to moderate hearing losses, but the very small battery compartments and controls make them unsuitable for anyone with arthritis or manual dexterity problems.

In-the-Canal (ITC)



Completely-in-the-Canal (CIC)



Physical factors to consider



Helping you find the right hearing solution starts with a comprehensive hearing test and ear examination. Your hearing care professional can give you advice in order to find the optimal solution for you. The physical factors that can affect the choice of hearing instrument are described here.

Your hearing loss

This is an important factor. If you have a mild hearing loss, you can wear smaller instrument styles, but if it is more severe, you will need more powerful instruments with larger batteries.

Your ear anatomy

Modern hearing instruments can fit most kinds of ear anatomy. The only restriction to wearing certain types of instruments will be the size and shape of your ear canal. Your hearing care professional can tell you more about this.

Other ear-related factors

Another influencing factor is earwax. Earwax is normal, but too much of this would demand a more wax-proof model that is easier to clean. Similarly, if you live somewhere humid, or do a lot of physical activity, you would need a more moisture-repellent style.

One or two hearing instruments?

Even if you hear slightly better in one ear than the other, it is best to wear two instruments. You need two ears in order to be able to understand speech in noisy environments - and to keep track of what is happening all around you.

Take crossing a road, for instance. If a car is approaching from the left, the sound will reach your left ear first, and with more intensity, so you will immediately know which way to turn. This can make all the difference in potentially hazardous situations.

Today's most sophisticated hearing instruments are purpose-built to support hearing from both sides. By communicating wirelessly and comparing information, they help to fill in any gaps in your sound picture - including ones you did not even know you were missing!

Did you know that if you have a hearing loss on both sides, but decide only to treat the ear that needs it the most, the ear that is deprived of stimulation will get even lazier! This condition is known as "auditory deprivation".

If you treat both ears your friends will be relieved because they will no longer have to address you only from your good side!

Which personal factors are important?

The following questions are designed to help you identify your requirements, so you can communicate them clearly to your hearing care professional.

How would you describe your lifestyle?

Do you consider yourself the “stay-at-home” type who enjoys reading, watching TV and gardening? Or are you outgoing with an active social life and lots of hobbies?

If you are the active type, you should consider advanced or premium hearing instruments. These can adapt to the widest variety of listening situations - including noisy ones. And being fully automatic, they do not require constant adjustment; all you will have to do is to listen!



Did you know that the sound from your TV, landline or mobile phone, music player or computer can be sent wirelessly, straight into both hearing instruments? This turns them into the world's smallest hands-free headset - so you can listen without disturbing others!

What are your communication needs?

Ask yourself exactly where you would like to be able to hear much better. For instance, what happens when you are socialising with family and friends? What challenges are involved in eating out or going to the theatre, etc? It is a good idea to involve family, as their observations can be valuable.

What else would you like to connect to?

Better hearing does not only include face to face situations; sound comes from other audio sources too - such as phones, TVs and stereos. If you would like to be able to watch the news or listen to Mozart without bringing the roof down, you might consider hearing instruments that offer wireless connectivity.



Which personal factors are important?

What about looks?

Design is not just about functionality; it is also about aesthetics. After all, if you do not like the cut of a particular suit, you are unlikely to want to wear it. It is the same when selecting hearing instruments. You can be trendy and stylish - or totally discreet. Or both! With so many styles and colours to choose from, it is easy to find one that suits your personal tastes.

What about ease of use?

Where usability is concerned, do you want to be able to control the volume and settings of your instruments yourself, or would you prefer automatic, "hands-free" operation?



What about sound quality?

Sound quality is perceived very differently from person to person, depending on what you do, where you go and who you meet during a normal week. How active would you say your lifestyle is? As a rule, the more demanding it is, the more sophisticated your hearing instruments need to be in order to help you keep up.

Have you been here?

Imagine dining in a busy restaurant with friends. In the background there are dishes clanging, chairs scraping, people talking and laughing, and waiters rushing

about. You are straining to follow what is happening at your table - but the effort is wearing you out. Eventually you start pretending you can hear. You nod, look interested and laugh with the crowd. But you did not get the jokes and you feel like an outsider. You leave the place with a throbbing headache, disappointed with no plans to repeat the experience anytime soon.

High quality hearing devices would reduce disturbing background noise, so you could focus more easily on your friends. Perhaps for the first time in years, you would be able to relax, be yourself - and be genuinely part of the group!

Did you know that Oticon's wireless instruments actually communicate with each other? By preserving the unique characteristics of the sounds that each ear is picking up, they give you a much better idea of where you are in relation to people and objects in your environment.

The people at Oticon call this benefit "spatial awareness", but those who experience it call it "natural hearing".

Your next step

Now that you are aware of what you need to consider and the types of hearing instrument technology that are available, you can talk to your family, make some notes and get ready for the next consultation at your hearing clinic.

When reviewing hearing solutions, keep in mind that better hearing is not just a passing phase; it is a long-term investment in your health and wellbeing.

National health systems, government subsidies or medical insurance plans may cover part of the cost of a pair of high quality hearing devices; just ask your hearing care professional for more details.

As caring professionals they will be ready to deal with any questions or concerns as they guide you on the way to better hearing.



People First

People First is our promise
to empower people
to communicate freely,
interact naturally and
participate actively

Hearing Care Professional:

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