



Five Facts You
Should Know...

Before Buying Hearing Aids



PHONAK
hearing systems

Hearing loss is so gradual, we sometimes
don't realize
it's happening.

Most of the time when hearing changes, it happens slowly. Sounds get softer. Voices seem muffled. You have the feeling that something isn't quite right with your hearing, but you're not really sure what it is. In fact, your gradual hearing loss may be more obvious to your family and friends than you realize.

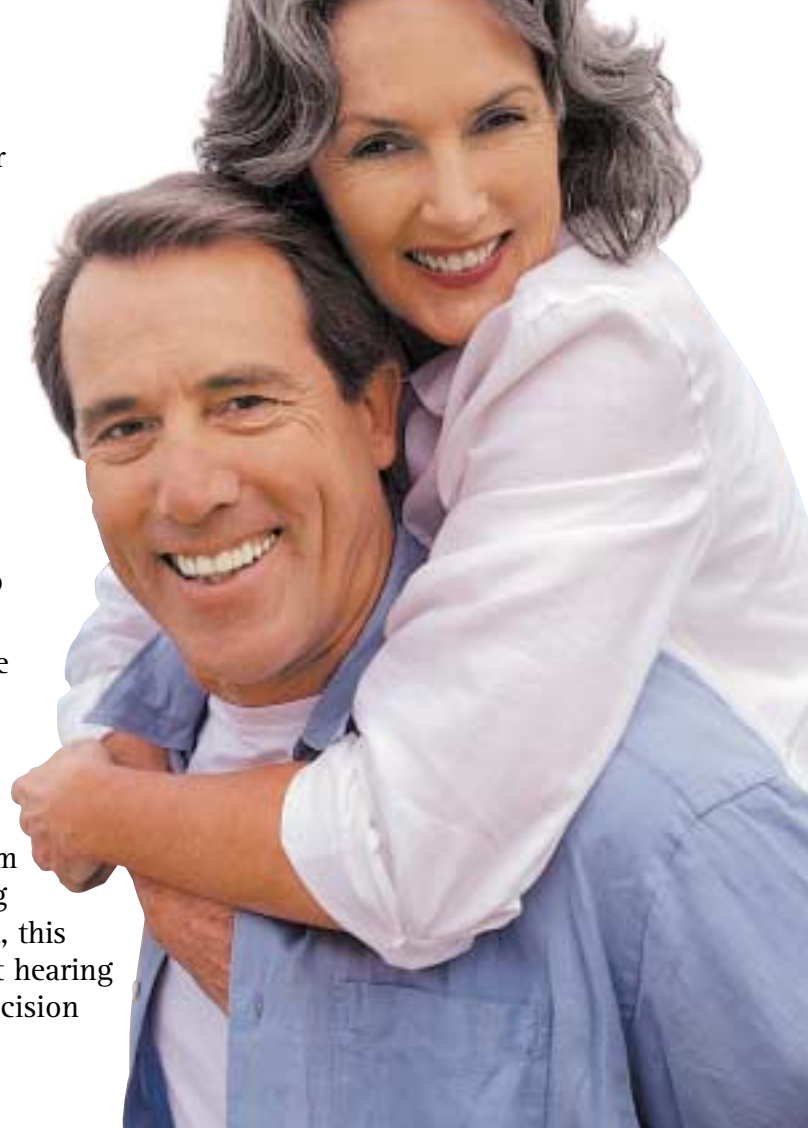
Does this sound familiar?

Recognizing the signs of hearing loss.

Ask yourself the following questions to see if you or someone you love might have a hearing loss.

- Do you often ask others to repeat what they say?
- Have your family and friends expressed concern about your hearing?
- Does background noise often interfere with your ability to follow a conversation?
- Do you avoid crowded situations like restaurants, theaters and parties because you have difficulty hearing in these places?
- Do you often turn the volume on your TV or radio louder than others would prefer?
- Do you have a history of continued noise exposure to things like power tools, loud music, motorcycles or a noisy workplace?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you may be one of the 28 million Americans who suffer from hearing loss and should consider getting your hearing checked by a licensed hearing professional. In addition, this booklet will help you learn some important facts about hearing loss and hearing aids so you can make an educated decision to determine if you could benefit from wearing them.



Fact 1:

Hearing aids can improve the *quality of your life*

Early treatment of hearing loss not only can enhance the enjoyment of your personal relationships, but it also can make you feel better about yourself.

An independent consumer group conducted a survey among people over the age of 50 who suffered from hearing loss and determined that there were definite advantages to wearing hearing aids.¹ In fact, the survey showed that people who wear hearing aids enjoy many benefits over those who do not wear them, including:

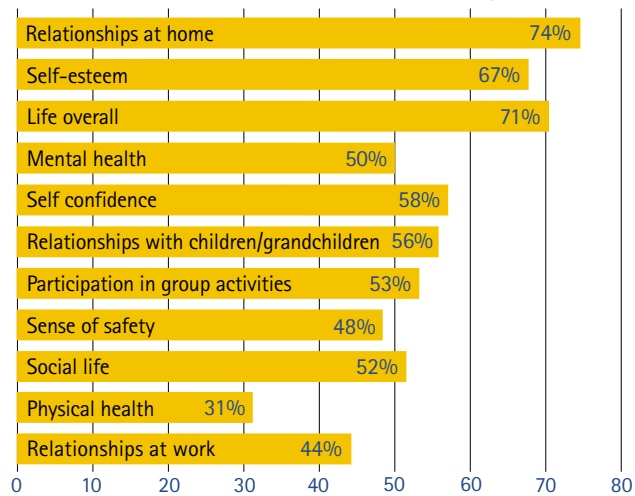
- Better relationships with families and friends
- Improved social life
- Higher self-esteem and better feelings about themselves
- Improved mental and physical health
- Greater independence and security


These advantages were noticed by both hearing-aid wearers and their families.





User Satisfaction in Various Types of Hearing Situations¹



 Percent of hearing-instrument owners and their families reporting improvement in the quality of life due to hearing instruments.

If you're still not convinced that hearing aids can help, consider that the Better Hearing Institute found that 95% of people with hearing loss can be helped with today's advanced hearing aids.²



“Hear the difference”

“I am delighted to be hearing sounds I have not heard for ages. Nothing truly replaces the ear, but my Phonak digital hearing aids are certainly a tremendous advancement over the previous basic amplifiers...”

Martin P. — Haddenfield, New Jersey

71%
of hearing-aid
wearers report an
improvement in
life overall¹



*“Enrich life
through sound”*

“I wanted to thank you for a superior hearing instrument. The digital AudioZoom on my Phonak hearing aids gives me confidence in noisy situations like no hearing aid ever did before...”

Carrie S. — Canton, Ohio

67%
of hearing-aid
wearers report
an improvement
in self-esteem¹

better your decision will be

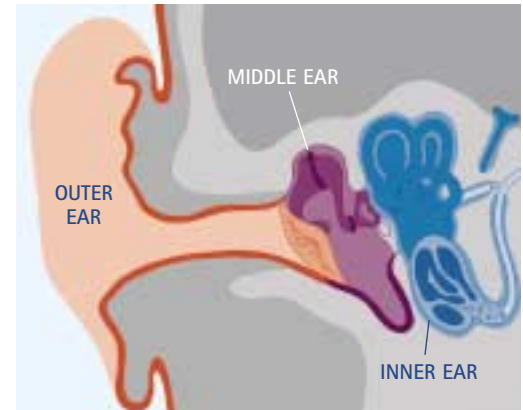
Understanding the way your ear works can help you decide how well you can benefit from wearing hearing aids.

The more you know, the

your decision will be

The ear is a wonderful, complex organ made up of three parts:

- The outer ear consists of the auricle (or pinna), the ear canal, and the eardrum and directs sounds from the outside environment into the hearing system.
- The middle ear consists of the smallest bones in the human body – the hammer, anvil and stirrup – which connect the eardrum of the outer ear to a thin membrane-covered opening on the wall of the inner ear.
- The inner ear includes the cochlea, which contains the hearing nerves and the semi-circular canals, which



help control balance. Sound is transmitted from the cochlea through the auditory nerve to the area of the brain in charge of processing and interpreting auditory input.

Possible causes of hearing loss:

In the outer ear

- Excessive accumulation of earwax
- Infection of the auditory canal

In the middle ear

- Perforation of the eardrum
- Infection or fluid in the middle ear
- Otosclerosis (a condition that occurs when the tiny bones in the middle ear become fused together)

In the inner ear

- Damaged inner ear structures, most typically caused by natural aging, excessive exposure to noise, head injuries and medication that is toxic to the auditory system

Hearing loss caused by outer and middle ear problems generally can be treated successfully with medication or surgery. If not, hearing aids may help. In the inner ear, damage normally can not be reversed medically; however, well-fitted hearing aids can usually help a great deal to overcome the problems associated with hearing loss.

Hearing and understanding.

When people speak, we understand them, even though we might not hear every sound they make. That's because not all sounds are essential. Without even realizing it, we instinctively fill in certain gaps in conversation.

If you have a hearing loss, you can do the same thing – if you're in a quiet place. But in a noisy restaurant or at a party – that's a totally different story. Essential sounds become “buried” in noise and because so much information is “lost,” you can easily get confused about what is being said.

Fortunately, today's hearing aids are designed to help you hear and understand conversation, even in noise.

Fact 3:

better in background noise

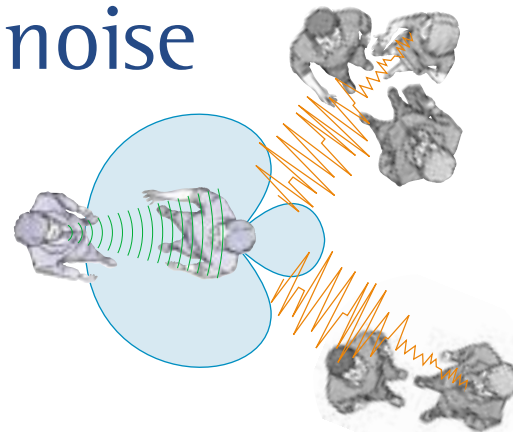
*Phonak pioneered the AudioZoom technology that is clinically proven to separate speech from background noise.**

Hearing aids can help you hear

Merely making sounds louder, something many hearings aids do, is not enough to help you hear better in all situations, especially in noisy environments. This is because these instruments pick up every sound they “hear,” whether they’re important to the listener or not. What you really need in order to improve your hearing in any environment is an instrument that can separate the speech you want to hear from the background noise you don’t want to hear.

This is the AudioZoom™ difference.

Unlike many other hearing instruments, each AudioZoom hearing aid contains two microphones. One picks



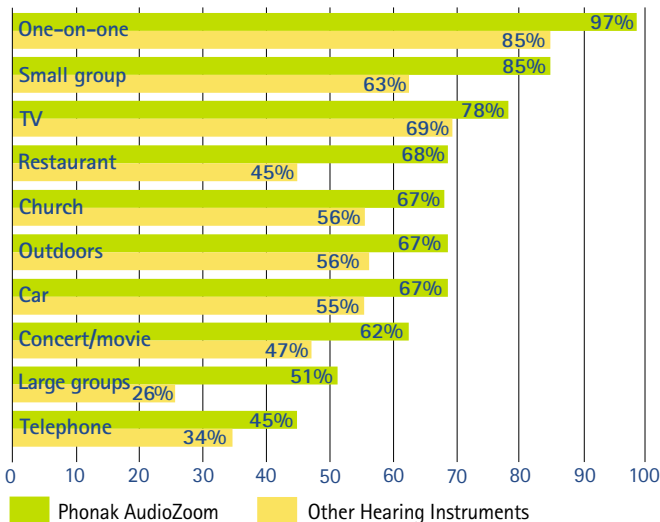
up sounds in front of you and the other picks up sounds from the sides and from behind you. Since the sounds are collected separately, the tiny computer inside the hearing instrument is able to analyze the sounds individually. Therefore, AudioZoom enhances speech coming from the front and diminishes distracting sounds coming from the sides and from the rear.

*See clinical results 3, 4, 5 and 6 on the back of this brochure.

Real-life tested.

When compared with 12 of the leading high-performance hearing aids, AudioZoom was rated by users to be 50% better in noise than the second-ranked hearing aid. And nearly three times better than the poorest-performing instruments.⁷

User Satisfaction in Various Types of Hearing Situations⁷



Kuk, Francis, "Hearing-aid survey tests user satisfaction." *Hearing Instruments*, January 1996.

When measured in a variety of listening situations, AudioZoom's effectiveness was proven again – even in noisy environments!⁸

Two ears are better than one.

Just as stereophonic sound introduced a fuller, more natural way to listen to music compared with mono recordings, the hearing center in your brain relies on two independent "microphones" – your ears – to interpret the richness of the sounds you hear. Consequently, if only one ear is functioning properly, you would probably have difficulty locating the direction from which sound is coming and understanding speech in noisy environments.

The same is true with hearing aids. Certainly wearing one is better than not wearing any; however, the optimum solution is achieving balanced hearing in both ears with the aid of two hearing instruments. Your hearing professional can advise you about what is most appropriate for your specific hearing needs.

A photograph of a middle-aged Black couple smiling warmly at the camera. The man is on the right, wearing a white polo shirt, and the woman is on the left, wearing a white tank top. They are both looking directly at the viewer with genuine happiness. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

*“A world of sound
awaits you”*

“Phonak digital hearing aids have enabled me to re-enter a world of sound that I thought was lost to me for the balance of my life.”

Vincent D. — Reno, Nevada

74%
of hearing-aid
wearers report an
improvement
with relationships
at home¹



“Hear your world”

“I am well aware that no hearing aids are going to make a person hear normally, but... it's great to have some like the Phonak digital hearing aids I am now wearing. It is positively awesome... to be able to cut out much of the background noise enabling me to hear the people in front of me.”

Henry S. – Atlanta, Georgia

53%
of hearing-aid
wearers report
an improvement
in participating
in group
activities¹

Fact 4:

about *wearing* hearing aids

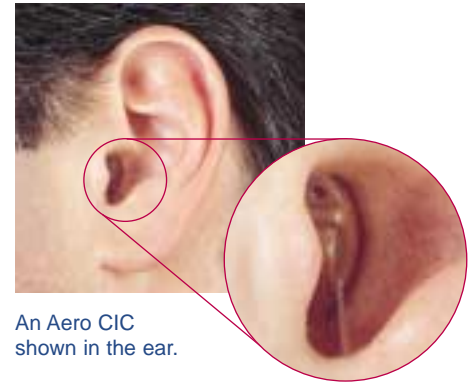
Today's hearing aids are so small, most people will never know you're wearing them.

The stigma of wearing hearing aids is a thing of the past. In fact, if you're not embarrassed to wear glasses to help you see all the wondrous things of this world, you shouldn't be embarrassed to wear hearing aids to help you hear the sounds you don't want to miss – the voices of your loved ones, or the giggle of a grandchild. Because, today, hearing aids are a lot less noticeable to wear than glasses.

Digital technology has helped solve the problem.

Thanks to the same advances in microchip technology that have enabled the amazing miniaturization of cameras, computers, televisions,

and much more, many of today's hearing aids are virtually invisible. You can now choose hearing aids that are so discreet most people will never notice you're wearing them – from cosmetically elegant behind-the-ear hearing instruments to tiny completely-in-the-canal models.



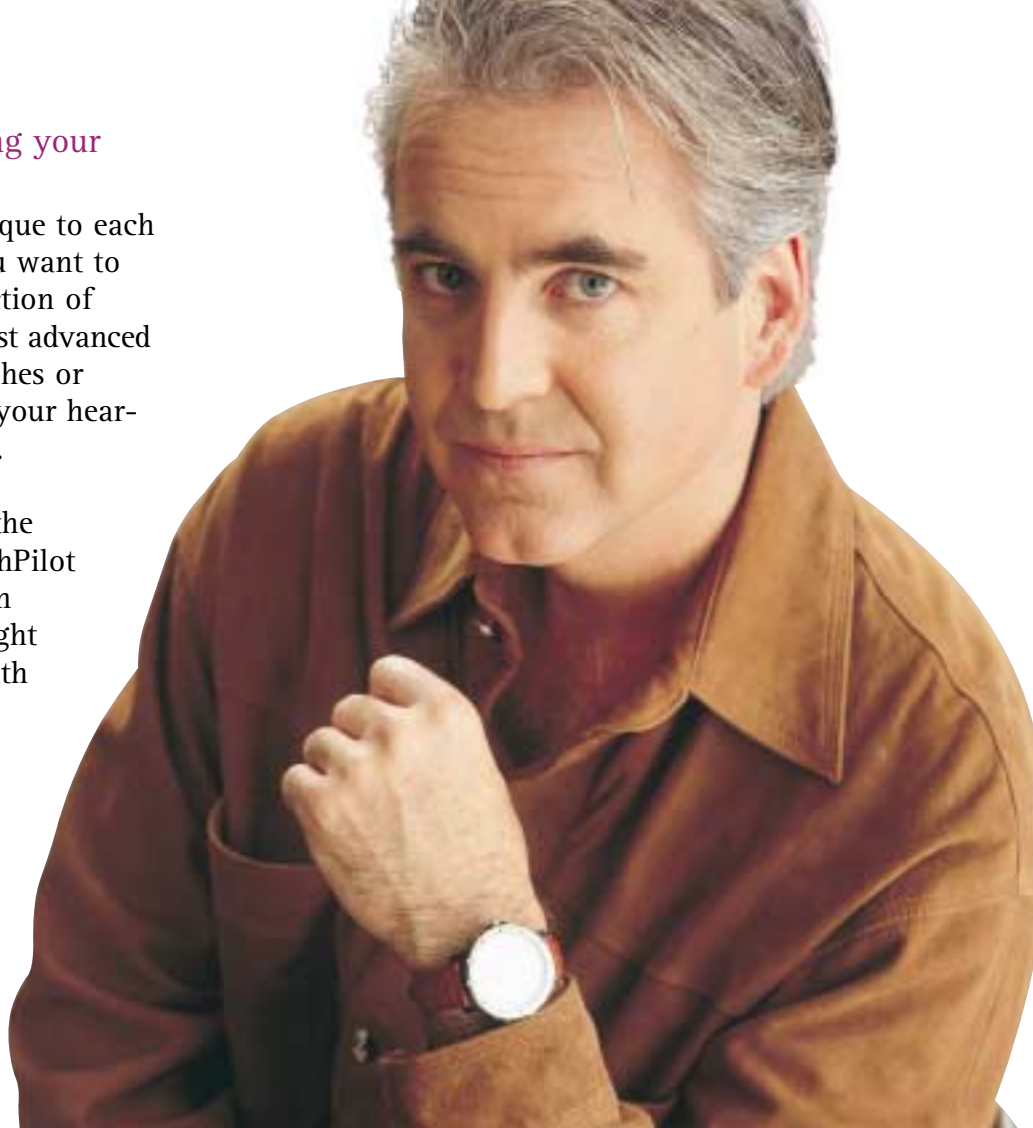
An Aero CIC shown in the ear.

WatchPilot™ even makes controlling your hearing aids easy and discreet.

Because listening preferences are unique to each person, there may be times when you want to override the automatic program selection of your hearing aids. For this reason, most advanced hearing systems have on-board switches or remote controls to make controlling your hearing aids as easy as pressing a button.

Phonak makes this even easier with the WatchPilot remote control. The WatchPilot is an attractive, functional wristwatch with the hearing aid controls built right in. So adjusting your hearing aids with WatchPilot is as convenient and discreet as checking the time. Your hearing professional can tell you which Phonak hearing aids are compatible with the WatchPilot remote control.

The WatchPilot is available in your choice of color and size.



Fact 5:

find the *right* hearing aids

Fitting hearing aids is both an art and a science, so choosing the right hearing professional can make all the difference in the satisfaction you get from your hearing instruments.

Today's sophisticated technologies require that hearing practitioners have special training and expertise. They are highly qualified to give you a complete hearing evaluation that, along with your personal preferences and communication needs, will determine the style of hearing aids that will be best for you. During the fitting process your hearing professional can make fine adjustments so that the instruments will perform at their best. And your hearing professional can help you with on-going maintenance, adjustments and, if necessary, repairs to your hearing aids.





Your hearing professional will take the guesswork out of choosing the right Phonak hearing system for you.

Phonak makes a variety of options available to you and, depending on your specific hearing needs, your hearing professional will help guide you to make the best selection. In fact, in many cases, you can receive a personal demonstration of the hearing aids you're considering, right in the office.



*“Hear more
than ever”*

“I recently acquired two Phonak digital hearing aids with AudioZoom technology and a remote control. I am delighted to be hearing sounds I have not heard for ages. One of the tests was to attend the Shakespeare Festival here in Williamsburg, Virginia. It was a pleasure to enjoy seeing a play again and hearing quite well.”

Violet M. – Williamsburg, Virginia

56%

of hearing-aid wearers report an improvement in their relationships with children/grandchildren¹



*“Music to
your ears”*

“I wanted to thank you for a superior hearing instrument. I was watching a film in Alice Tully Hall in NYC, New York. This hall is not designed for films, but rather for concerts. My Phonak digital hearing aids allowed me to hear what no hearing aids ever did. I was able to hear more than I have in a long time...”
Donna E. – Fort Lee, New Jersey

52%
of hearing-aid
wearers report an
improvement
in their
social life¹

Phonak is a *world leader* in the design and manufacture of high-performance, *high-quality* hearing systems

*Phonak offers
a full range
of hearing
instruments to
fit your hearing
needs, your
lifestyle and
your budget.*

Here is a guide to help you understand the differences in hearing aid technologies and prices.

Claro™ Digital Hearing Systems
with Adaptive digital AudioZoom™ –
Aero™ Digital Hearing Systems

Advanced Digital Hearing Systems (\$\$\$)

- Best speech understanding in all listening situations
- More automatic features
- Recommended for people with active lifestyles: those whose livelihoods depend upon hearing and communicating effectively in order to make informed decisions and who are active in work and/or recreational activities



PiCS with AudioZoom™ –
Astro™ – NovoForte™

Digital Programmable Hearing Systems (\$\$)

- Better speech understanding in quiet and in noise
- Multiple listening programs
- Recommended for people who find themselves in a variety of listening environments and those who are involved in social activities

Classic Line

Conventional Hearing Aids (\$)

- Makes all sounds louder
- Quiet conversation is easier to hear; little or no help when background noise is present
- Recommended for people who have a more sedentary lifestyle and have less need to hear and communicate with others in the presence of noise

A sample of Phonak hearing aids:



References:

1. Kochkin, S. & Rogin, C., "Quantifying the obvious: The impact of hearing instruments on quality of life." *The Hearing Review* 2000 7 (1); 6, 8, 10, 12, 16, 18, 22, 24, 26, 30-34.
2. Better Hearing Institute, www.betterhearing.org, 1-800-EAR-WELL.
3. Valente, M.; Fabry, D.A. & Potts, L.G., "Recognition of speech in noise with hearing aids using dual microphones." *Journal of the American Academy of Audiology* 1995; 6:440-449.
4. Voss, T., "Clinical evaluation of multi-microphone hearing instruments." *Hearing Review* 1997; 4 (9): 36, 45-46, 74.
5. Schuchman, G.; Valente, M.; Beck, L. & Potts, L., "User Satisfaction with an ITE directional hearing instrument." *The Hearing Review* 1999 6 (7); 12, 16, 21 & 22.
6. May, A., "Multi-microphone instruments, DSP and hearing-in-noise." *The Hearing Review* 1998 5 (7) 42, 43, 44-45.
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8. Kuk, F., "Hearing-aid survey tests user satisfaction." *Hearing Instruments*, January 1996.

PHONAK
hearing systems

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