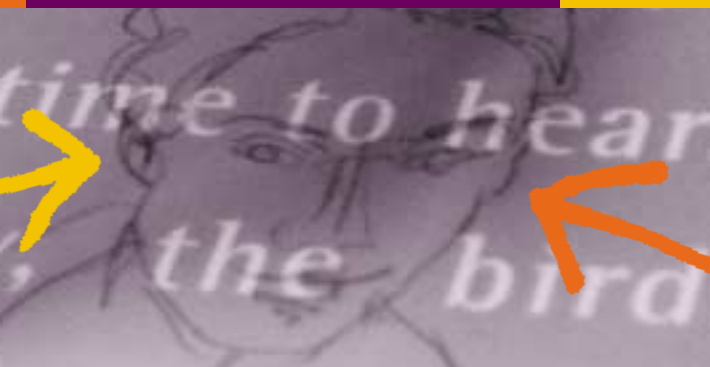


Caring for your hearing instruments

3



Practical tips for In-the-Ear
and Behind-the-Ear instruments

PHONAK

hearing systems

Phonak

Phonak is one of the world's leading manufacturers of hearing systems. Based in Stäfa, Switzerland, the company develops, produces and distributes Phonak high-tech hearing systems dedicated to helping people with impaired hearing participate in everyday life.

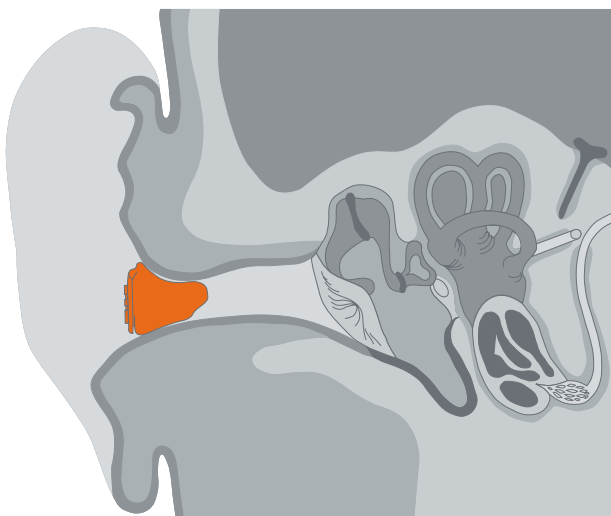
The company is committed to improving speech understanding in all environments, especially noisy ones, putting an end to the frequent complaint, "I can hear but I don't understand what's being said!"

Phonak is a driving force in the development of innovative technologies. Find out more about the Phonak product range from your hearing-care professional or visit

<http://www.phonak-us.com>

A good fit is vital

There are two reasons to make sure a hearing instrument fits well – one acoustic, the other anatomical.



The acoustic reason

A loosely fitting hearing instrument can cause feedback (whistling). This happens when the instrument does not fit snugly and the amplified signal finds its way back to the microphone. For comfortable, interference-free hearing, a snug fit in the ear canal is essential.

The anatomical reason

A hearing instrument that does not fit snugly can work its way out of the correct position when its wearer is chewing, yawning or simply talking. This is because the shape of the ear canal is influenced by movements of the jaw. You can feel this by putting the tip of your finger into the ear, then slowly opening and closing your mouth.

How nature protects the eardrum

The ear drum is a highly sensitive membrane and nature has taken various precautions to protect it from damage:

Cerumen (earwax)

The external part of the ear canal contains sweat and sebaceous glands. The glands produce a waxy substance known as cerumen or earwax, which traps bacteria and dust. Cerumen is only produced in the outer third of the ear canal and gradually works its way to the entrance, where it can be removed. Never try to clean down inside of the canal yourself. If you have a problem, consult your hearingcare professional or physician.

Protective hair

The external part of the ear canal is covered with tiny hairs that act like a curtain to protect the ear drum from dust and dirt. If dust or bacteria do succeed in penetrating the curtain they are trapped by the cerumen.

Ear Canal

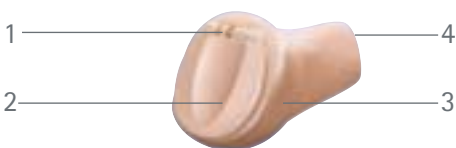
The ear drum is further protected by bends in the ear canal. This helps prevent objects accidentally entering the ear and damaging the ear drum.

Cerumen and hearing instruments

When you first start wearing a hearing instrument, it often seems like a foreign object in the ear. This feeling disappears after a short familiarization period. All the same, hearing instruments can stimulate the production of cerumen. Some instruments are equipped with a protective cerumen filter to help prevent earwax from entering the instrument. If the outlet of the hearing instrument is blocked by earwax, the volume may be reduced or even cut-off altogether.

The In-the-Ear hearing instrument: a masterpiece of technology

The construction of modern In-the-Ear hearing instruments



- 1 Microphone opening (sound inlet)
- 2 Battery door combined with on/off switch *
- 3 Custom-made shell (housing) with instrument identification and serial number
- 4 Sound outlet with wax guard*

(* - optional)

The technical specifications and appearance may differ from one type of hearing instrument to another.

Inserting hearing instruments

If possible, switch off your instruments before insertion to avoid feedback (whistling) and be sure to put them into the correct ear.

Blue marking → **left ear**

Red marking → **right ear**

Insert the instrument canal-end first, into the ear canal. Tug gently on your ear lobe and push the hearing instrument into the correct position. Although this may require a little practice, you will soon become so familiar with the procedure that it will seem like second nature.



Removing hearing instruments

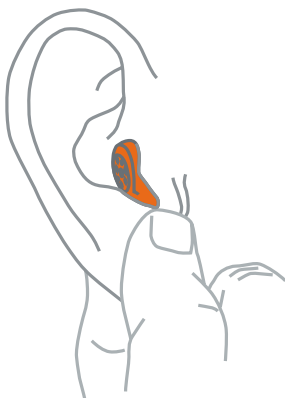
If possible, switch off your instruments before removing them to avoid feedback (whistling). Remove them over a soft surface (bed, sofa) and take care not to drop them.

1. Hearing instruments with a removal handle

Grasp the handle between your thumb and index finger and pull the instrument upwards out of your ear.

2. Hearing instruments without a removal handle

Put your thumb behind your ear lobe (just below the hard cartilage) and gently press your ear upward to push the instrument out of the canal. In order to help it along, make chewing movements with your jaw.



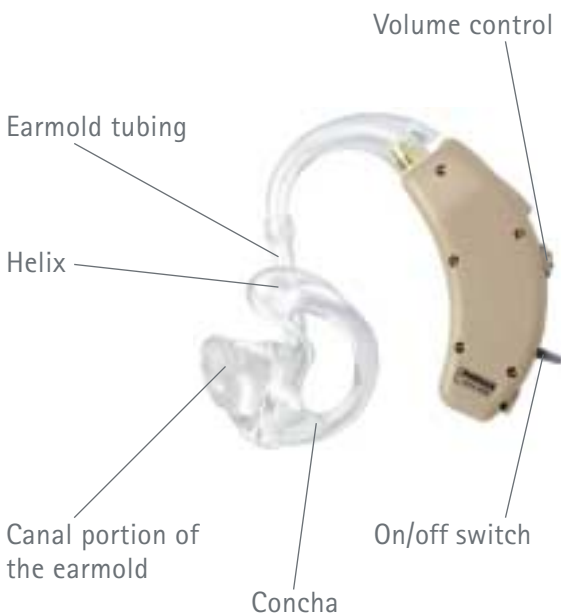
Grasp the protruding instrument and remove it.



Behind-the-Ear hearing instruments

The custom earmold - its role

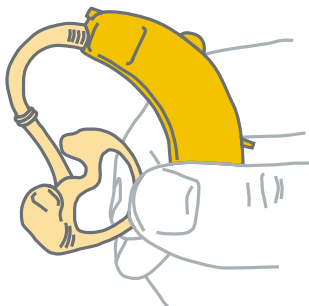
The custom earmold couples your hearing instrument with your ear. Its purpose is to channel sound from the hearing instrument, through the ear canal, to the eardrum. It will also keep the hearing instrument in place. A professionally made and fitted custom earmold contributes to the comfort and overall quality of the hearing experience.



Correct insertion and removal of the custom earmold

You can achieve optimal performance and comfort only when the earmold is correctly in place. For the best results, follow this step-by-step procedure:

1. Turn the hearing instrument off, or to the minimum volume setting to avoid feedback (whistling).
2. Using the hand on the same side as you wear your hearing instrument (right hand for right ear, left hand for left ear) grasp the earmold between the thumb and index finger.



3. Raise your hand to your ear making sure the canal portion of the earmold is facing your ear. Tilt your hand slightly forward.



4. Place the canal portion of the earmold inside your ear canal. If it is difficult to get into place, stretch your ear by pulling it gently backwards and upwards with your other hand. You can also apply a very thin coating of Vaseline on the canal portion of the earmold, taking care not to block the opening.



5. Now that the canal portion is in place, twist the earmold backwards so that it fits into the concha and the helix portion is under the fold.
6. Now position the instrument behind the ear. Be careful not to twist the tubing.



7. Check the placement of the earmold by tracing the contour of the ear with your finger.



8. Switch on the instrument, adjust the volume to a comfortable level.
9. When you want to remove your hearing instrument, turn it off or reduce the volume. Grasp the earmold (not the tubing) and pull out gently but firmly.

Be patient – this will soon be second nature to you.

Useful tips for caring for your hearing instruments

Modern hearing instruments are durable, easy-to-use and reliable. Nevertheless, a few simple precautions will ensure that your instruments continue to give you many years of trouble-free service.

1. Avoid getting your hearing instruments dirty

Always make sure your fingers are dry and clean before handling your hearing instruments. The microphone inlet is only a few tenths of a millimeter (1/16 to 1/8 inch) wide and can become blocked easily.

2. Avoid sharp knocks and impact

Insert and remove your hearing instruments over a soft surface (a bed or sofa).

3. Protect your hearing instruments from heat

Never leave your hearing instruments where they may be affected by extreme heat. Protect them from direct sunlight (at home and in a parked car) and do not leave them near radiators.

4. Protect your instruments from dampness

Remove instruments from your ears before showering, bathing or swimming.

Do not leave them in the bathroom where they could suffer water damage. Dry any perspiration inside and around the ears regularly. Dampness and condensation can damage the circuitry in your hearing instruments. We recommend that you leave the battery compartments open overnight and use the special drying kit available from your hearingcare professional.

5. Keep your hearing instruments out of the reach of children and pets

Dogs are irritated by the feedback (whistling) sound and attracted by the owner's scent. Often the result is a chewed up hearing instrument. The hearing instrument battery can be dangerous if swallowed. Consult a medical professional immediately if the battery is accidentally ingested.

6. Avoid contact with make-up or hair spray

The fine particles produced by make-up or hair spray can easily block a microphone inlet. Always remove hearing instruments before using such products.

7. Clean your instruments carefully

Clean your instruments using a soft, dry cloth. Alcohol, solvents and cleaning fluids can damage electronic circuitry.

8. Ear hygiene

Always make sure that the ear is clean.

If the volume of your instrument diminishes, it may be due to the sound outlet or the cerumen filter being blocked with wax or dirt.

You can obtain special cleaning products from your hearingcare professional.

9. Keep your instruments in a safe place

When your instruments are not in use, always keep them in the presentation case or in a special drying box. Remove the batteries if the instruments will not be used for some time.

10. Always have repairs carried out by a specialist

Screwdrivers and oil can be fatal for hearing instruments. Merely touching the electronics or micro-mechanics can lead to irreparable damage. See your hearingcare professional for service of your hearing instrument.

Cleaning and care of your In-the-Ear hearing instruments

1. Your hearingcare professional will give you specific information on cleaning your hearing instruments and may recommend a special cleaning kit.
2. Water and solvent cleaning agents can damage electronic circuitry. Use a soft, dry cloth to clean the instruments whenever they are removed from your ears.
3. Remove any accumulated cerumen daily. When using a cerumen removal tool, e.g. a brush, always clean the instrument from below. This will prevent particles of wax or dirt from getting inside the instrument.
4. If the volume of your instrument diminishes it may be the result of the sound outlet or the cerumen filter being blocked with cerumen. Either replace the filter or ask your hearingcare professional for advice.

Note:

In-the-Ear hearing instruments are particularly susceptible to damage caused by ear wax, moisture or dirt. This is because the electronics are integrated into the shell.

Cleaning and care of your Behind-the-Ear hearing instruments

Clean the earmold daily. Wipe it with a soft, dry cloth and always check the opening of the earmold to be sure it is not clogged with ear wax. A clogged opening will prevent sound from reaching your ear.

About once per week you should clean the earmold. Consult your hearingcare professional.

Consult your hearingcare professional if ...

- The earmold causes pain or discomfort
- Earwax cannot be cleared from the earmold
- The tubing becomes yellow or brittle
- The hearing instrument whistles making it impossible to set the correct volume

Important note

Always separate the earmold from the hearing instrument before you wash it. The hearing instrument should never come into contact with water.

Before putting the two back together, make sure that they are both completely dry.

To reattach the earmold to the hearing instrument:

Make sure that the curve of the earmold matches that of the hearing instrument (see diagram)

Right



Wrong



The volume drops

- Low battery – replace it.
- The sound outlet is blocked with earwax – clean with a small brush. Change the cerumen filter.
- Blocked microphone inlet – consult your hearingcare professional.

The instrument "whistles" in the ear

- The instrument is not correctly inserted in your ear. Try again.
- The instrument is in the wrong ear – swap it over.
- The fit of the instrument is too loose – consult your hearingcare professional.

The instrument does not work

- There is no battery in it – insert one.
- The battery compartment is not closed – shut it.
- The battery is dirty – clean the battery surface.
- The battery is dead – replace it.

The instrument slips out of your ear

- The ear canal is wet or dirty – wipe the hearing instrument and your ear with a soft, dry cloth.

The instrument hurts your ear

- The instrument is not correctly positioned – remove and re-insert it. If the problem persists, consult your hearingcare professional.

The instrument is difficult to insert

Place a small drop of non-irritating lubricant on your finger and smear onto the ear canal entrance before inserting your instrument. Ensure that no lubricant enters the sound outlet or microphone apertures.

Important

If the suggestions above do not solve the problem, contact your hearingcare professional.

The following Phonak information brochures in the series "**Hear better – participate in life**" are available from your hearingcare professional.

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Hearing and hearing loss

2

Using hearing instruments successfully

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Caring for your hearing instruments

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Two ears are better than one

5

Tips for communicating with hearing instrument users

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