

7 High-Tech Reasons You Should Finally Deal with Your Hearing Loss

Lifting your mood, boosting your energy, protecting your earnings, super-charging your social life — and even keeping your mind sharp: These are just some of the many spoils that come with facing and dealing with a noise-induced hearing loss that has been slowly but persistently creeping up on you.

The quality-of-life and feel-good benefits of treating even just mild hearing loss brought on by years of loud music, power tools, high-volume headphones, motor-sport engines, crowded night clubs and bars, noisy restaurants, and raucous sporting events are plenty. But in this digital age of smart phones and wearable technologies, the draw for many solution-minded consumers may be in the technology itself. Super-smart, super-sleek, super-convenient, and super-sophisticated — today's hearing aids give you a multitude of reasons to address that hearing loss you've been trying so hard to ignore.

Consider these inspiring facts about today's highly functional, high-powered hearing aids. They just may get you to finally do something about your hearing loss and make your life easier.

They're cool, sleek, discreet and virtually invisible. New technologies are all about function, style, and effortless living. The latest hearing aids offer all three. The designs are incredibly attractive with smooth, modern contours. And they're much smaller than even conventional Bluetooth earpieces. Many of the latest hearing aids are so tiny, they sit discreetly and comfortably inside the ear canal, out of sight. You might say that aesthetically, hearing aids have had a complete makeover.

They cut out background noise so you hear what you want to hear. Even with the best of hearing, it's tough to hear people when it's noisy. But many state-of-the-art hearing aids not only reduce unwanted noise, they also scan the listening environment and automatically adapt to it — even in wind. There are hearing aids that can actually “geo-tag” a location. So if it's convenient for you to network at a certain coffee shop, your hearing aids will know when you're there and adjust themselves accordingly. For the record, it's not by chance that the latest state-of-the-art hearing aids are so adaptable to changing noise scenarios. Recordings of virtually every imaginable listening situation have been used to create algorithms and “train” these amazing mini-computers for your ears.

They capture the natural richness and variation of speech, so it's easier to follow the conversation wherever you are. Let's face it, one of the most pesky aspects of not hearing as well as you once did is not catching everything people are saying. New technologies not only help you decipher speech details in music and noise, but they better preserve and clarify the more subtle sounds of language — like the consonants B, S, F, T, and Z — so you can really follow what someone is saying. No faking.

You can hear from all directions — even when scoping out what's in the fridge. Advanced directional microphone technology lets you hear from the back and side — something really important when driving a car. But it also makes it easier to hear voices more clearly in other everyday settings — like when your head is in the fridge and your significant other is talking at your back. Yes, that's one great feature.

Digital, Bluetooth, and wireless capabilities keep you connected when it counts. Digital, wireless hearing aids are now the norm. That means many new technologies let you stream sound directly into your hearing aids — at the perfect volume — from your smartphone, laptop, conference-room speakerphone, home entertainment system, and other Bluetooth devices. Music, phone calls, podcasts, videos, whatever you listen to through your iPhone (or iPad and iPod for that matter), you can listen to through many hearing aids. Some even let you control the volume and other personalized sound settings with an app on your smartphone. Several types of wireless accessories give you a listening boost by bridging the gap between you and the speaker, making it easier to hear in loud or large places. Using a wireless mini-microphone — with cool, contoured designs, some even looking like a pen— placed on the restaurant or conference-room table, or near anyone you want to hear, makes it feel like they're speaking directly and clearly into your ears, no matter how noisy the setting. You adjust the volume.

State-of-the-art comfort and convenience mean you'll always want to use them. Super-small, super-light, customized, functional, and ergonomically designed, hearing aids today are more comfy than ever — yet tough enough to withstand real life. For most of the newest hearing aids, there's virtually no feedback or whistling thanks to advances in digital technologies. And most are hypoallergenic with nanotechnology coating to keep them clean and dry. Some are even fully waterproof, so you can swim and shower in them, no problem. Plus, today's greater-than-ever audio-processing goes hand-in-hand with less battery usage. Some hearing aids are even rechargeable, eliminating the need to change batteries altogether. But the convenience and comfort don't end there. Some brands let you set up reminders for things like appointments or taking medicine. Perhaps the most "peace-of-mind-preserving" life hack, though, is leading-edge technology that helps soothe the ringing in your ears (tinnitus) in a way that suits you.

There are even more disruptive hearing technologies on the horizon. Totally out-of-sight, semi-permanent hearing aids that stay in for two to three months let you shower and sleep in them, no fuss. Perhaps the most futuristic glimpse of hearing aids is tied to recent ground-breaking studies revealing a significant link between untreated hearing loss and dementia. Hearing aid manufacturers are deep in the trenches working to create future break-through technologies that will make it as easy as possible for the brain to decode speech and other sounds. Reducing cognitive load — that is, drawing fewer resources from the brain just to "hear" — is a very good thing. After all, we really do hear with our brains and not with our ears. Some hearing aids with these technologies are already available. Yes, leading-edge hearing aids are here to help you keep your mind sharp and your life easier by hearing your best at every age — starting today.