

FRANCIS SLABBER & JANET STEER

CARING FOR ALL YOUR HEARING PROBLEMS

THE HEARING CLINIC

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The Advantages of wearing two hearing aids

Nature gives us two ears and they work best when used together. Years of research have shown that many people with hearing loss in both ears benefit most from wearing hearing aids in both ears. Sounds in general may have a more balanced, natural quality. In complicated listening situations, many people find one aid more distracting than helpful.

What improvements can one expect with two aids?

Improved Listening in Noise

With two hearing aids, soft speech is easier to understand. In situations where you are listening to speech in noise, the speech is more easily separated from the background noise if the two ears are working together.

Improved Hearing Sensitivity

When wearing one aid only, many people try to turn up the volume to compensate for the lack of sound in the other ear. This only makes sounds louder in one ear, not clearer in the other. By wearing two aids, one would gain considerable volume just because the two ears are working together. Increasing the volume to compensate for the unaided ear also means a greater chance of "whistling".

Improved Sound Localisation

As in the principal of the hearing trumpet, soundwaves travel to the outer part of each ear and are funnelled to the eardrum, then pass through the middle ear until they reach the inner ear or cochlea. Here sound vibrations are changed into electrical energy, which is sent via the auditory nerve to the brain.

The brain has to tell us where sound is coming from. Sounds from our right, left, above, and below arrive at each ear at slightly different times and intensities. The head is less than 30 cm wide, yet our brain is able instantly to calculate these tiny differences between the ears. These differences tell your brain which way to turn your head.

When wearing only one hearing aid, it is difficult to determine where sound is coming from, because the aided ear will always hear everything "first", making it difficult to locate the sound source.

Others advantages to wearing two hearing aids include improved speech recognition and sound identification, improved sound quality and the fact that both ears' auditory pathways are active.

Adaptation and acclimatisation play a significant role in the successful wearing of hearing instruments

