



FRANCIS SLABBER, JANET STEER & ASSOCIATES
PROFESSIONAL CARE FOR ALL YOUR HEARING PROBLEMS

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Newsletter Spring 2010

Trainable Hearing Aids

Too good to be true? Unfortunately, hearing aids can't be trained to fetch your paper or roll over and play dead – although some have been known to do the latter quite well, but they are trained to get to know you. Technology now allows the instruments to record which volume or treble levels you prefer, and then, once it has learnt what you like, make the preferred adjustments automatically.

Some hearing aids can now memorise situation-specific hearing preferences based on user adjustments via a button, wheel or remote control. The hearing aids record each change made along with the detected sound situation - whether speech, noise or music. Once trained, the hearing aid will assume listening preferences per environment and make adjustments accordingly. This leads to a dedicated response setting for speech, noise and music. Memorised settings are automatically selected when the system detects the relevant sound environment again. In other words, if you regularly turn the volume down when you are in a noisy shopping centre, the hearing aid will assess how much you need based on an average over time and then make the adjustments automatically for you next time you go shopping.

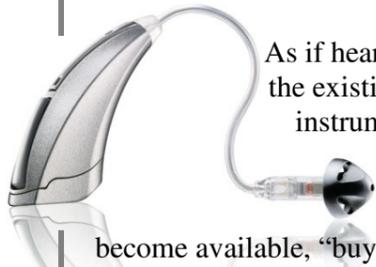
The advantage of these systems is the individuality offered. Each wearer's own preferences are taken into account. Normally, audiological formulas estimate the best settings based primarily on the hearing loss itself. However, because these formulas use averaged values, they don't necessarily meet every wearer's preferences. Therefore fine tuning by a skilled professional is necessary to find the best possible solution. By training the hearing aid to your liking, back and forth trips to your audiologist can be minimised.

However, the hearing aid can only respond to the information it receives. It doesn't know when you change it by accident, forget your remote at home or forget to switch it off overnight. It also doesn't understand when you are just having a bad day. These are things an audiologist can understand and interpret, so the professional's opinion, knowledge and experience is still the most valuable feature of any hearing aid, regardless of how clever it is.

As yet, logging and learning are not standard features on all hearing aids, but it is the way of the future. Who knows, hearing aids may soon bring you your paper after all.

Please check the replacement value of your hearing aids annually and specify them on your all risks insurance for loss or damage!

Upgradeable Hearing Aids



As if hearing aids that can learn aren't enough, we can now, in some instances, upgrade the existing technology in a hearing aid to the newer version without discarding the old instrument. These aids are built on what's called an open platform, meaning that as new technology becomes available, they can be upgraded.

Should your budget only allow for a lower level unit, you could, as funds become available, "buy" the next model and only pay the upgrade fee. The costs vary depending on what upgrade you choose and is model dependent. We have been asking for this for years! Currently, Starkey is the only manufacturer offering this option and it only applies to certain models. We would need to advise you as to whether or not your aid is upgradeable. The downside of this technology is that it is heavier on battery life, but the possibility alone is exciting.

Lend an Ear Project

We hope that our initiative to offer a ½ price hearing test to a friend or family member had only the best possible outcome for all concerned and did not ruin friendships, marriages or bridge games. From our side we've seen a positive response to the vouchers and we will most definitely do it again next year. Thank you for the support.



All Charged Up

Today everything seems to be either recycled or recharged, and so too in the hearing aid world. We now dispose of used hearing aid batteries in an environmentally friendly manner and we also supply rechargeable hearing aid batteries.

There are 2 types of hearing aid batteries available:

1. Normal Disposable Batteries. These are sold in packs of 6 and once used they are not reusable, but can be recycled. We charge R38 per pack. Problems include the occasional dud battery and remembering to change batteries. Depending on the size of battery and type of hearing aid, battery life can vary from 4 days to 3 weeks.
2. Rechargeable Batteries. Some are model specific and supplied with the appropriate charger when purchasing the hearing aid. The battery is charged in the aid overnight. Others are not specific to a particular make or model, but do need a special charger and are removed from the aid every night to be charged. A charger costs R1000 and the batteries cost R120 each. Issues with rechargeables include moisture damage due to a lack of ventilation of the aid, chargers that become faulty and an expected battery life of only 10 to 20 hours, so not advised for those who have long days. They have to be charged daily and generally replaced annually.

Please remember that we supply both normal as well as rechargeable hearing aid batteries at all our practices. We also post phone orders (postage added).

In the Practice

Things are calm yet busy and all is well. We would like to thank you for your continued support of the practice and our super team for their hard work. There has been a string of new products launched in 2010 with more to come and we will be happy to inform you of new options and assist you with demo's if you are curious. Remember that medical aids usually only part-pay for hearing aids, so plan ahead. Instruments are generally expected to last 3 - 6 years and with forward planning, you can spoil yourself with decent technology without breaking the bank. Have a look at our insert on TV listeners and the pamphlet on Hear2Day which offers support to people living with hearing loss.

We've updated our Website, so please visit it and give us your feedback.
All articles featured in past newsletters are listed.
We have also added a Staff Page so now you can see who's who in the zoo.
Visit us at www.hearingclinic.co.za

<i>Wynberg</i>	<i>35 Waterloo Rd</i>	<i>Monday to Friday</i>	<i>8h30 - 17h00</i>	<i>021 - 797 7948</i>
<i>Tokai</i>	<i>Tokai Village</i>	<i>Tuesday & Thursday</i>	<i>8h30 - 16h30</i>	<i>021 - 715 5623</i>
<i>Claremont</i>	<i>19 Belvedere Rd</i>	<i>Monday & Wednesday</i>	<i>9h00 - 15h30</i>	<i>021 - 797 7948</i>
<i>Fish Hoek</i>	<i>Valyland Centre</i>	<i>Wednesday & Friday</i>	<i>8h30 - 16h30</i>	<i>021 - 782 3322</i>

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