



Helpful Hour: How to get the most from your audiology appointment

2. Planning your appointment

Effective communication is key to getting your point across. Consideration should be given to what you wish to communicate along with how you are going to communicate.

1. How things sound

Consider and reflect on what things sound like to you. Decide on a clear and concise way of describing them to aid the audiologist's understanding of your hearing. Use descriptive words where possible.

What are sounds like?

Harsh or loud sounds might be: abrupt, piercing, grating, jarring, rasping, or pulsating. Or they might: beep, blare, clank, clink, croak, rasp, rumble or shriek.

How about describing soft or subtle sounds?

Gentle noises can be challenging to describe. Are they breathy, droning, whooshing or fizzing? Do sounds chime, glug, gurgle, jingle, sizzle, swish, swoosh, tinkle, trill, wheeze, or whirr?

2. In addition to hearing loss

Tinnitus

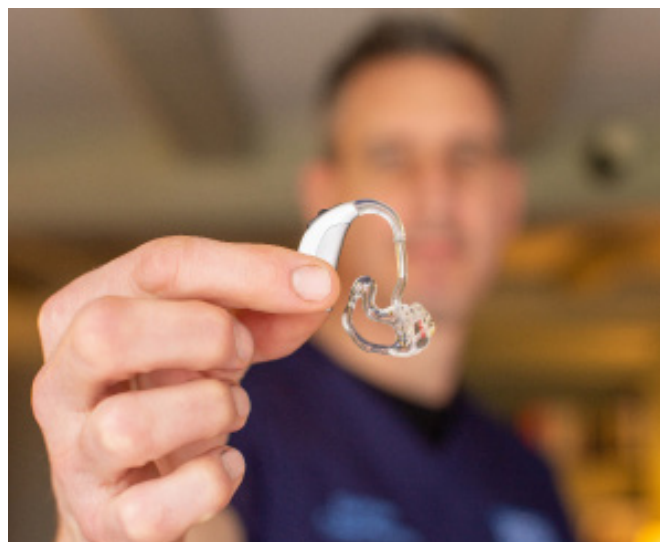
Many people experience tinnitus. Consider and reflect on how it affects you. What form does it take? Use descriptive language regarding the pitch, volume and the level it distracts you at.

Can you describe the pitch and volume? What does it mask or cover? Does it sound like static, crickets, sirens, ocean waves, or ringing?

Is it whooshing, buzzing, clicking, humming, murmuring, rumbling, ringing, or whistling? Is it constant or pulsing?

Balance

If your hearing affects your balance, when do you notice it the most? Consider times of the day, before or after doing something in particular, or if you are tired and hungry. How do you mitigate it, how long does it last?



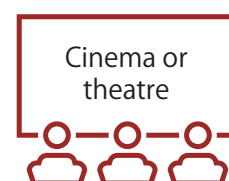
3. What you can and can't do

Consider different environments and appliances and explain what your issues are with them. Can you hold a telephone conversation? Do your family complain about the television volume?

Are there environments (open plan offices, restaurants or bars) that present challenges?

Are there aspects of your lifestyle, hobbies or employment that are challenging?

Knowing and mentioning these will help your audiologist build a picture of who you are and what you want to achieve.



4. Lifestyle

Medication

Be prepared to explain and list any medication and supplements that you are taking as some medication can aggravate hearing loss. To save time in the appointment, take along copies of your prescriptions so the audiologist can advise.



Explain any allergies that you may have to your hearing aid earmould material.

Explaining what hobbies or leisure activities you enjoy, or who you have in your home or life builds a picture of who you are. The audiologist will take all this into account.

5. Prioritise

Organise your questions so that the most important ones to you are prioritised. If you are taking along a hearing buddy to your appointment, explain to them your prioritisation so that they are familiar with them on the day of your appointment.

6. Make lists



In a notebook, write your questions on one side and leave space for the answers. Be sure you understand the replies. Your hearing buddy can be your scribe if you wish.

Think about how you phrase your questions. Telling your audiologist that you are upset that you can't hear properly when you eat out can make it hard for them to think of things to help.

Instead say that you want to hear conversations in noisy places and this can lead to a practical solution.



CALL TO ACTION: What to do with this information?



- Start by building a list of questions you want to be answered.
- Take this list with you to your appointment and discuss with your audiologist.
- Keep a diary of when your hearing is most affected, when you started with new hearing aids or the function on your hearing aids. This will reassure you when you do notice progress, or it will be an accurate log of when things are harder.
- Take along details of any prescribed medications you are taking, as well as any over-the-counter medications that you take.

Useful links

(These links open external sites. We are not responsible for content on these sites.)

Tinnitus UK – tinnitus.org.uk

Masterclass: How to describe sounds – <http://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-describe-sounds>