



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association North Shore Branch

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Mountain Ear

From the Desk of the President



Hi Everyone,

Wow, didn't winter arrive in a hurry. My ears don't mind the cold, thankfully, otherwise I'd need to wear mufflers and then I wouldn't hear a thing. My feet and toes though, not so happy.

Like a lot of other people, this Covid thing is really getting to me, on the one hand I'm behaving well and keeping to Dr. Bonnie's suggestions (are they rules or just requests), but on the other hand I want to let it all out, run on the beach and eat out at the busiest restaurants and bars.

I wear a badge showing that I'm a hoh, (hard of hearing person, for those who don't know the expression – watch how you pronounce that) but I'm getting tired of not hearing people, talking through their masks, telling me what to do.

I'm tired of people, with masks on, looking at me and saying "what's the matter with you, are you deaf? You can all guess my most polite answer to that!

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February Presentation

Monday, February 15, 2021

7:00 pm Via Zoom

Guest Speaker

Ken Jones

**Director, Tinnitus Association of
Canada, President, BC Tinnitus
Association and
Facilitator of the Greater Van-
couver Tinnitus Self Help Group**

Topic

**“Tinnitus-nothing
you can do about it”**

False

For information call

604-926-5222

**To request an invitation to join the Zoom
meeting please email chha_nsb@telus.net**

And, it's only been nine months, would you bet that it won't be at least that long again?

Anyway, enough of my bellyaching.

To all of you who managed to sign on for our Zoom AGM, thank you for being there. Everything went pretty well, and the Sound Advice session afterwards was also a success, as I'm sure you'll have heard elsewhere.

Also, as you probably know, our Sound Advice leaders, Flo and Hugh, are now doing their thing, via zoom, with some regularity. My thanks to them both, please keep up the good work.

I recently read a book, a comic book really, called *El Deafo*. The author is one Cece Bell. Cece was born (in Richmond, Virginia) hearing, but contracted meningitis at an early age and became severely hard of hearing. The term used was "severely to profoundly deaf", some diagnosis for a four year old! Anyway, She is now quite a prolific writer, and her books cover all sorts of education for the young and young at heart. This cartoon book is almost her autobiography, and I strongly recommend it. It's a very short read, 3 or 4 hours at the most, and both my wife and I enjoyed it immensely.

Although I was, and still am, far better at hearing than Cece, I recognised so much of myself as I was reading, as did my wife, that I literally couldn't put the book down. I haven't been able to source the book here in B.C., but I got it in digital form at my local library (North Van City), so I'm pretty sure that you'll be able to get it if you ask.

As I'm writing it's 10th November, so I'll say remember three things; when we didn't have to wear these horrible masks, when we were younger and could hear better, and those who sacrificed their lives so that we could be here and free to complain about the current situation, this too will pass.

Remember them, it's the least we can do.

And, as this will be my last message to you in 2020, let me finish by wishing you all a Happy What-ever you celebrate, and here's hoping that 2021 will be a better year, and sound that way.

All the best,

Alan

Time to Get Closer

by Rick Waters

If you're like me, living with a moderate to severe hearing loss, I bet there have been countless times when you wish you were closer to the person speaking, closer to the television, or closer to the front of a lecture hall. We just know we'll hear better if we're closer to the speaker, or if we could move right up to the TV. Well, we can do just that, and without even getting up out of our chair.

How? By using the widely available and excellent wireless accessories that are available from the major makers of hearing aids and cochlear implants. In the next few paragraphs, I'd like to offer some suggestions on how to get the most out of these little miracle workers.

OK, let's start at the beginning. You CANNOT take the TV Streamer, or Remote Microphone home, put it in the top drawer, and live happily ever after. It doesn't work that way. Obviously, the first step is to, are you ready for this? READ THE INSTRUCTIONS! That's right folks, you really should read the instructions. I suggest picking one accessory to start with, get it set up and working, then move on to the next one. And while things may seem complicated, it's really no more difficult than following a recipe.

Getting Started:

Typically, the instructions go over:

Battery charging

Connecting the device to your TV or music system,

Pairing the device to your hearing aids or CI, and

Connecting the device to the hearing aid or CI.

Fortunately, battery charging is usually straight forward, and typically is not even required with a TV Streamer. Most manufacturers recommend charging the battery, used by the remote microphone, carefully when you first get the device. The instructions tell exactly how to do that.

Let's talk about pairing the devices to your hearing

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instruments next. There is a good reason why they must be paired: they are typically a small radio transmitter and a small receiver. They have to be on the same frequency, or they will not be able to send any information. And, another reason for pairing is for privacy. If your neighbour had a similar device, it is possible they could listen in on whatever you are doing. Pairing prevents this from happening.

Pairing has become very simple. In the case of the Unite range of accessories offered by Resound and Cochlear Corporation, you simply:

Turn off the device and your hearing aid(s) or CI.

Turn on the device

Press the pairing button, and see that the small indicator light begins to blink

Turn on the hearing aids or CI. The indicator light will typically change colour when pairing is complete

You do this for the TV Streamer, and for the ReSound Multi Mic, and, if you have Phonak instruments, their MiniMic or Roger system. Other hearing aid manufacturers have their own TV streamers and proprietary remote microphone systems. Some examples are: Starkey's Remote Microphone, Widex's COM-DEX Remote Mic and Oticon's ConnectClip.

Now what?

A TV Streamer must be connected to the TV or, if you have an elaborate system, to the sound amplifier. There are two sorts of connections: One uses a pair of wires, usually with red and white connectors, and goes to an "Audio Out" connection on the back of the TV. The other type is a digital connection, and goes to "digital audio out" on the rear of the TV. Sometimes, it is easier to find the connections on the back of the cable box.

While some streamers connect to your hearing aids automatically, with others it's necessary to press the program button on the hearing aid (or hearing aid remote control) or go into the App on your smart phone to connect. And, if you've followed the instructions (remember them?) it will suddenly seem that you are sitting right up close to the TV! Amazing!!

With a Remote Microphone it's not necessary to connect to any audio source, although with some

devices, you can plug into a music player, audio system, or TV. What is necessary is to "connect" to the hearing devices. This is something that is only possible if you have already "paired" the device to your hearing aid or CI. Typically, you turn on the microphone, press a program button on the hearing aid or CI, and listen for a tone or series of beeps. At this time, pass the remote microphone to the person with whom you are speaking! Again, if you've followed the instructions, it will seem as though they are right next to you, magically talking into your ears. Wow! Think about how this would be very helpful in our current situation where social distancing is now mandated because of Covid-19.

If you only do this, I bet you'll be delighted with the improvement in your life. But, and this is a big but, there's more you can do. Stay with me.

Icing on the Cake

That TV streamer? It can do more than just make it easy to hear your television. It can be connected to a music system, so that you can hear music as you go about your day in the home. And, of course, it can work for an iPod or any other portable music player. Usually, all you need to do is:

Unplug the cord from the TV where it plugs into the streamer;

Plug in a connecting cord from the music player to the streamer (most systems include the right cord);

Turn on the music player, turn up the volume, and press the program button on your hearing aid to connect to the signal. Enjoy!

The Remote Microphone has lots more uses. For example, you can use it:

In the car to hear people riding in the back seat. I'll let you figure out how to do that.

You can use it on a bike ride, to hear your companion. Just have your companion wear the remote microphone around their neck, and tucked into their vest, jacket or top. (This will get rid of the wind noise)

In a restaurant, pub, or cabaret. Just have your friend or partner hang the mic around their neck.

At a family dinner, you can put the remote microphone flat on the table. This way, it will pick up

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voices from around the table, making each speaker seem closer to you

Wrapping it Up

We started off by talking about how we, as hard of hearing folk, have a natural tendency to try to get closer to people with whom we're speaking, or to the television when we're trying to hear a program. Of course, we all know you cannot always move to get closer. Fortunately, wireless accessories, available for most hearing aid brands and cochlear implants, bring the speaker's voice or the television closer to you, right up to you in fact.

(The following article is reprinted here with permission and is from the blog section of the website www.hearinglosshelp.com where you will find many more interesting articles. Neil Bauman, Ph.D. is a hearing loss coping skills expert and the owner of the website from which the article is taken.)

Why Does My Tinnitus Randomly Switch Ears?

by Neil Bauman, Ph.D.
© November, 2020

A lady asked,

I've had ringing in my ears for several months now either due to taking a drug, or a smoke alarm suddenly going off. It is so strange though. For a couple of days, my left ear will have low ringing, then it will stop and go to my right ear and it will ring for a few days. Then, it seems like both ears ring. What is going on with my tinnitus and my ears? This is totally confusing to me. Should I be worried?

Excellent question. It almost seems like your brain can't make up its mind where your tinnitus is coming from, doesn't it? And if you think that, you'd be exactly right. Let me explain.

As you know, your brain sits inside your skull. What you may not have thought of is that your brain sits there in total silence and total darkness. It knows absolutely nothing about the world around it of its own knowledge. The only way your brain knows anything of what is going on around it is by the signals it receives from your sensory organs (ears, eyes, nose, etc).

Since we are talking about tinnitus, I will limit this explanation to just our ears and sound signals. Your brain receives voluminous electrical impulses from your ears. As it processes this enormous string of electrical impulses, it begins to form a 3-dimensional picture of the sound environment around it. Since it can't "see" the real picture itself, this 3-D picture is your brain's "best guess" from where the various sound signals are coming. Sometimes this "best guess" is very clear and accurate. Other times its "best guess" is "way off". It all depends on the "quality" of the sound signals it receives.

Tinnitus signals, since they are really phantom sounds, can be rather nebulous at times. Thus, sometimes your brain's "best guess" is that the sound signal is coming from your left ear. Thus, you perceive tinnitus in your left ear. Conversely, sometimes its best guess is that the sound signal is coming from your right ear. Consequently, you perceive your tinnitus in your right ear.

Furthermore, sometimes your brain's best guess is that the tinnitus sound signal is coming from both ears. Thus, you "hear" your tinnitus in both ears at the same time.

There is even a fourth possibility. That is that your brain's best guess is that the sound signals don't come from either ear, but are just right there in your brain. In this case, you "hear" your tinnitus inside your head without reference to either ear.

As you now can appreciate, a lot depends on how well your brain interprets, and makes sense out of, the very complex sensory input it receives. To be sure, a lot of the time your brain gets it right. So if you had a blow to your left ear, for example, you probably will hear tinnitus as coming from your left ear.

It's only when the sound signals are ambiguous that your brain has a tough time making sense out of these signals. Thus its "best guess" may be fairly accurate or "way off".

Ask the Audiologist

by Deborah Maloon, R.Aud, (Ret.)

FAQs

Q. Why are hearing aids so expensive?



While hearing aid prices are high, it's important to know that you are paying for far more than just the devices themselves. Hearing aid pricing includes the cost of the device itself as well as the services of the professional. When you purchase a hearing aid, the price often includes all of the professional ser-

vices that go along with the fitting. Your hearing ability may change, your hearing aid may need repair and you may have questions occasionally. You are making an investment in the professional as well as the hearing aid technology. Another factor that affects the purchase price of the hearing aid is the technology level and features included. All hearing aid manufacturers strive to offer devices that meet the needs of patients and their budgets. Each year, hundreds of millions of dollars are spent by the industry to improve how these devices perform. Here's another way to think about the price of hearing aids. If your hearing aids cost \$4800, and they have a life expectancy of five years, they will cost you \$960 per year, \$80 per month or \$2.66 per day. In other words, while the total amount is high, the ongoing usage price is reasonable and most people agree that it is well worth it.

Q. Can you use your smartphone with them?

Yes! Major hearing aid manufacturers have worked with Apple and Android smartphone makers to build your phone. Smartphone hearing aids make your life easier and more convenient by streaming audio directly from your phone to your hearing aids—like phone calls, music, and driving directions.

Q. Is there a relationship between technology that allows your hearing aids to connect wirelessly with hearing loss and cognitive decline?

At present, the jury is out on whether hearing aids or any other type of intervention for hearing impairment has much impact on cognitive decline. More research is needed and is ongoing. Hearing impairment is certainly associated with increased risk of developing dementia, and there is a very high number of patients in which hearing impairment and dementia co-occur. We do know that we need to focus on the functional benefits of hearing aids, as we know they are effective at reducing hearing disability and thereby improving one's quality of life.

If you have a question that you would like answered by the audiologist, please submit them to us at:

chha_nsb@telus.net

Hearing Aid Selection

To help your audiologist or Hearing Instrument Practitioner (HIP) select the best hearing aid for you and to establish what you like to do and how your hearing aids can be programmed to allow you to hear clearly and also enjoy your activity. Look at the checklist

and rate each activity according to the scale below. Feel free to add other activities and comments to the list. Take this list or make your own list when you visit your audiologist/HIP.

Rate/Scale:

1. I do and have no problem with. . .
2. I do and have a hard time with. . .
3. I used to do but avoid doing because I have a hard time with. . .
4. I don't do and it's not important. . .
5. I don't do and it's a problem and I miss it. . .

Activities:

1. I go to movies.
2. I go to the theatre.
- 3 I go to music concerts: Indoor / Outdoor
4. I go to sports events: Indoor / Outdoor
5. I go to restaurants.
6. I meet friends at coffee shops.
7. I go to parties/ social events.
8. I entertain people at my own home.
9. I participate in church activities.
10. I participate in meetings.
11. I sing in a choir.
12. I play a musical instrument.
13. I play in a musical group.
14. I listen to the radio/stereo.
15. I watch TV on my own.
16. I watch TV with other people.
16. I participate in outdoor activities: walking group, hiking, golf, sport team, etc.
17. I drive with a group of people or am a passenger in a vehicle.
18. I talk on the phone: land line or cell phone:
Pleasure/Business
19. I go shopping at the mall.
20. I use public transportation.
21. I travel by airplane, ferry, and train.
22. I work in a setting with other people.
23. I facilitate business meetings:
Small groups/Large groups
24. I go to conferences.
25. I dance.

You can find a downloadable copy of this checklist on our website:

www.chha-nsb.com.

Living Successfully with Hearing

Loss (aka Speechreading) is a course offered through Vancouver Community College. The 12-session course is designed to provide knowledge and skills for adults with hearing loss and their communication partners to communicate more effectively. Please see the flyer included with this newsletter for specific course details.

The course continues to flourish, despite the challenges introduced by COVID-19. The Fall sessions have individuals involved from coast to coast - Vancouver Island to Newfoundland! - and cover a wide range of participant ages, from their 30s to 90s! The unexpected benefits of the online sessions provide the opportunity to:

- participate from the comfort of your own home, no matter where you are - (especially appreciated in the colder winter months)
- review the online material for each week at your own convenience and as many times as you'd like
- spend the online zoom session reviewing, discussing, and practicing the topics and strategies
- participate in small classes (maximum 8) - ensures you can see all faces on the screen
- control your own volume on your device of choice (iPad, laptop, computer...)

Afternoon and evening sessions are currently scheduled for **Monday (7pm) and Tuesday (1pm) beginning the week of January 11th**. Additional days/times may be added if necessary.

All opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association or CHHA - North Shore Branch.

Sound Advice

**Presented by:
The Canadian Hard of Hearing
Association
North Shore Branch**

When we meet, we discuss topics and issues dealing with hearing loss. We look forward to seeing you there.

On the first Friday of each month from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM at the West Vancouver Seniors' Centre's Social Rec Room. Number of attendees will be limited. Please call 604-925-7280 to register.

A second session is held online on the last Monday of each month via Zoom at 10:00 AM.

**To attend please email:
chha_nsb@telus.net to receive an invitation to join the meeting.**

(Note that there are no meetings held in July or August)

**Subjects to be addressed include:
Technology;
About Speechreading;
Expert Coping Strategies;
Improving Hearing Environments**

**For Information call:
604-926-5222**

Living Successfully With Hearing Loss

Vancouver Community College's (VCC) Living Successfully with Hearing Loss (Level 1) course enables adults with hearing loss to engage more confidently in a hearing world by developing and practicing speechreading, communication strategies, and assertiveness skills.

This course promotes skill development and attitudinal change towards communicating with a hearing loss. Participants, including individuals who have hearing loss and their partners, reflect on how hearing loss impacts communication.

The course allows students the opportunity to create more effective personal communication, to identify and select communication strategies and tools, to increase self-confidence levels, and to learn to self-advocate. The students practice speechreading: they detect differences in mouth movements, discriminate and identify visual aspects of speech, and incorporate visual information with what they hear with the goal of improving personal communication.

Course topics

- Hearing anatomy and audiological testing
- Categories of homophenous sounds (e.g., /p b m/, / f v/, /t d n l/, /s z/)
- Speechreading practice with words, sentences and conversation practice
- Factors that affect the ability to communicate (i.e., environment, speaker, listener, message)
- Relaxation exercises
- Hearing assistive technology (e.g., hearing aids, telephones, FM and infrared systems)
- Conversational strategies (e.g., repetition, rephrasing)
- Communicating in difficult situations (e.g., telephone, restaurant, groups, children)
- Assertive behaviour (i.e., definitions, comparisons, practice, reflection)
- Body language and facial expressions
- Humour as a strategy

Course information

- Length: 27-hours part-time
- Start: September, January, and April
- Online courses available
- Financial aid may be available

Program admission requirements

- Students must have good spoken English and be 18 years or older
- An interview with the instructor is required
- Friends and family members are encouraged to register along with students who are hard of hearing

**Register now
to be online in
January!**



For more information, please contact:

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