



HOW TO HEAR BETTER ON YOUR TELEPHONE

Hearing your telephone ring

If you sometimes miss your telephone ringing, you can get an adaptor that flashes along with the ring. You could also get an adaptor that rings extra loud with different tones so you can choose the one you hear the best. The extra loud equipment is called a 'tone caller' and is free of charge to BT customers with a hearing loss – just call BT Age & Disability Action Team on 0800 919591.

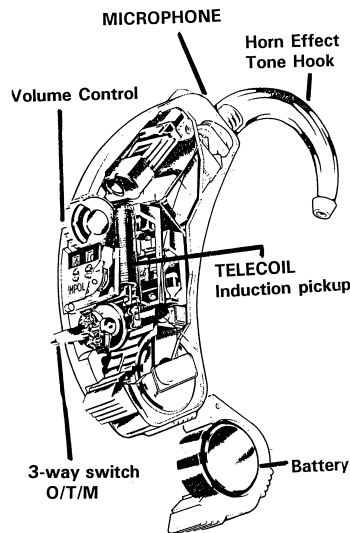
Listening on the phone without a hearing aid

Look at your telephone earpiece and you will probably find that the holes or slots that the sound comes out of are in the centre. It is important to make sure you place the holes in the earpiece directly in front of the entrance to your ear-hole. It is also important that the earpiece is touching your ear – even a ½ inch gap can halve the volume heard.

If you still can not hear well then you can change your phone to one with a speech amplifier and volume control. Models called Converse 1200, 325,425, Big Button+, Relate 3000 or a Paragon 450 are all capable of overcoming quite a pronounced hearing loss.

Using a hearing aid on the phone

There are 2 ways of using the phone; 1) using the microphone on the hearing aid and 2) using the loop (t-switch). There are different types of hearing aids – the most common ones are called 'behind the ear' and you have a mould in your ear and the aid sits behind your ear. The following is for analogue **behind the ear** hearing aids only, which look like this:



- **Using the microphone**

Do not put the earpiece part of the phone to your ear! Your ear has a plastic mould in it – the microphone on your hearing aid is at the top of the part sitting behind your ear. So you need to move the earpiece of the phone up to the top of your ear, over the microphone.



When you do this you may find your hearing aid whistles! If it does then slide the earpiece forwards, against the side of your head, towards your eyebrow up to your temple. Then twist the handset so that the earpiece is turned from your temple towards your ear. This will project the sound back towards the microphone. You can then adjust the position of the earpiece to move it progressively nearer to the microphone until just before the whistling starts.

- **Using the T switch / loop**

Some phones are fitted with an 'inductive coupler'. Some phones list it as a feature, calling it 'hearing aid compatible'. If appropriate you may find you hear even better by turning your hearing aid to the T position and using the loop. You must turn your aid back to the M position when you have finished using the phone. The system is fitted around the rim of the earpiece so it is important to get the rim as close as possible to the pick up point on your hearing aid. This is usually about 1cm back from the microphone. You may need to practise to get this in the right position!

- **In the Ear (ITE) Hearing aids**

Rest one edge of the earpiece against your ear so the sound from the earpiece flows across your ear canal – experiment by pivoting the earpiece at various angles until you find one you are comfortable with. If your aid has a T switch then turn over the switch and you should be able to use the same technique.

- **Digital telephones**

If you switch your hearing aid to the T position when using a digital phone with an analogue hearing aid it will cause interference and you will hear a loud buzzing noise.

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If you switch your hearing aid to the T position when using a digital phone it will cause interference and you will hear a loud buzzing noise.

Digital hearing aids are programmed in different ways to suit your particular hearing loss. The telephone earpiece should be held in the same way as for the above analogue hearing aids. However, Digital hearing aid wearers should also be able to use digital cordless and mobile phones as long as the hearing aid is not on the loop programme.

- **Handsfree or Loudspeaking phones**

Some phones, e.g. the Converse 1200, 325, 425 also feature loud speaking or hands free speech that allows you to have a conversation without holding the handset. This can be particularly helpful if you wear 2 hearing aids, body-worn aids or have a very severe hearing loss. The phones use batteries to increase the quality of the speech.

- **Cordless phones**

There are two types of domestic cordless phone, Digital and Analogue. Both connect to your ordinary phone line and calls are charged at normal rates and they have a limited range of up to a couple of hundred yards. However, if you wear an analogue hearing aid, do not use a Digital phone because their electronic circuitry is designed in such a way that even holding the handset near your head will produce horrible interference in your hearing aid. Most Digital hearing aids have not been found to pick up this interference. Analogue cordless phones tend to have a visible handset aerial, be white in colour, simpler to use and most do not have a screen, which displays the progress of the call among other features. Digital cordless phones tend to be dark grey in colour, have no visible handset aerial, and all feature a small screen provided information about the call and directory lists etc.

- **Mobile phones**

All current mobile phones are digital and will cause interference if you wear an Analogue hearing aid. However, it is possible to buy Inductive Loops which also feature microphones and plug into the phone. These can overcome the problem by allowing you to hold a normal conversation while keeping the phone far enough away from your head, on your belt or in a pocket, to prevent interference occurring. Digital Hearing aids are not affected by this interference and you can hold your mobile normally to the microphone of your aid.

- **Telephone strategies**

Remember that when people ring you up, they want to speak to you and so it is in their interest to make it easier for you to hear them. Now that you can hear better, remind your friends that they have no need to shout, but that they should try speaking a little more slowly.

If the caller is a stranger, do explain to them that you have some hearing difficulties or that you use a hearing aid and if you're not sure what they said :-

- i) Ask them to repeat the sentence
- ii) Ask them to say the sentence in a different way.
- iii) Ask them to spell important words.
- iv) Ask them to say the alphabet and stop at the correct letter
- v) If it's a number or a date, ask them to count from No. 1 and stop at the correct date

Always repeat back the information to check what has been said!