Aural Rehabilitation
Ways to Improve Your Communication

Approved by Hospital Veteran & Family Health Education Committee JAH #2015-10
This booklet provides helpful information for adults with hearing loss, tinnitus (ringing in the ears) or both.

Aural Rehabilitation Classes

Classes are provided at the Tampa VA for adults with hearing loss, tinnitus or both. The classes can help you learn to improve or maximize your communication function. See your hearing aid orientation book for the class schedule.

Telephone Hearing Practice

The Cochlear America Telephone with Confidence Program can also be helpful for those who use hearing aids.

View the Daily Word List and Daily Passage on the website below: http://hope.cochlearamericas.com/listening-tools/telephone-training

Phone with Confidence
Prompt Card
1 800 458 4999

**MENU OPTIONS**  **PRESS**

Hear Main Menu in English  1
Repeat Main Menu  3

Listen to Word List  1
Back to Main Menu  1
Repeat Word List  2

Listen to Passage  2
Back to Main Menu  1
Repeat Word List  2

**To read along with the menus, word lists, and passages please visit www.cochlearcommunity.com/rehab**
General Telephone Tips:

- **Start easy.** Hearing on the phone is not easy! Give yourself time to adapt to hearing with the implant. Practicing will increase your chances of hearing on the phone and will also allow you to progress faster.
- **Patience and persistence are key.** Stick with it! It is easy to become frustrated, but if you stick with it improvements will come.
- **Don't compare yourself to others.** Everyone’s hearing is different. One person may pick up the phone and hear everything while another may have to work much harder to be able to hear anything. Monitor your progress and compare your results over time.
- **Find your optimal listening settings. Be creative!** Use this program to test:
  - different phone lines (cell phone, landline, digital phones)
  - T-coil settings
  - phone accessories

**Beginner:**

- **Start by only trying to distinguish male and female voices.** The correct voices are listed on the readings that can be downloaded from [www.cochlearcommunity.com/rehab](http://www.cochlearcommunity.com/rehab)
- **Read along while you listen.** Following along as you listen will help your brain connect the sounds it hears to the words you read.

**Intermediate:**

- **Listen to the recording first then go to the website to read the passage or word list.** Begin to see how much of the passage you can understand without reading along.

**Advanced:**

- **Listen while there is background noise, and then read.** There are usually sounds all around us when we talk on the phone. Once you feel confident in a quiet setting, try adding some background noise. This will help you develop your concentration skills to hear what you want to hear and block out what you don’t.
Auditory Training

Angel Sound™ by Cochlear Americas

http://angelsound.tigerspeech.com/

This is a self-paced, interactive rehabilitation program that allows cochlear implant users (and hearing aid users) to practice and perfect listening and communication skills at home. The modules have audio-visual feedback for all skill levels. You will be able to:

- Practice discriminating and identifying sounds and speech components
- Improve vowel, consonant and sentence hearing
- Enhance telephone use and music enjoyment
- Share your training and test results with your audiologist

Other Helpful Websites to Improve Your Listening Skills
(accessed 2/21/14)

- http://cochlearimplantonline.com/site/online-practice-for-listening/
- http://www.hearingjourney.com/index.cfm?langid=1

Hear Coach by Starkey Laboratories is a free application (App) for auditory training that can be downloaded to Smartphones.
Adjusting to Your Hearing Aid or Cochlear Implant

How quickly you adjust to your hearing aid or cochlear implant will depend on how often you wear it. If you wear your cochlear implant every day, you will get used to it much faster.

Understanding conversations becomes more difficult as we age; with hearing loss this becomes even worse. Do not expect your hearing aid or cochlear implant to help you understand all conversations.

**Hearing aids or cochlear implants will not cure hearing loss:**

- Hearing aids or cochlear implants do not repair permanently damaged hearing nerve fibers or inner ear hair cells.

**Hearing aids or cochlear implants will not block out background noise.**

- It is not possible for an electronic device or your brain to amplify one person’s voice and block out other voices or sounds.
- When you begin wearing your aid or implant, you will notice an increase in the noise levels around you. This noise has probably always been there, but with your hearing loss, you probably were not noticing the background noise as much before.
- It will take time for you to get used to hearing the background sounds around you.

**Speech reading is necessary.**

- If you rely on hearing only, you will not understand all conversation.
- **Look and Listen** to improve your ability to understand conversation. You must use your eyes when listening. **Watch the face** of the person that is speaking.
**Free Apps to Download to Your Smartphone (Android and iPhone):**

**Clear Captions:** Can be used similar to closed caption on your TV. You can hear and read what’s being said.

**Dragon Diction:** Converts speech to text on your phone or computer

**Starkey Hear Coach:** This app is designed for both iPhone and iPad. Individuals with hearing loss tend to have more difficulty understanding speech with other noise in the area. As a result they may experience communication breakdowns. Tasks like the ones in this game have been shown to help improve listening ability in noise. When you have improved listening in noise you don't have to work as hard to hear. You can relax and have conversations without straining, even in loud or busy environments.

______________________________

**Apps for a Small Fee (Not Free)**

**Read My Lips!** There is a small fee

**By MegaEpic** (Lip-reading practice)

Open iTunes to buy and download apps.


______________________________

**Free sign language instruction websites**


**Definition of Apps:**

Short for application, usually a small, specialized program downloaded onto mobile devices

Example: using a GPS app for your iPhone
Speechreading –
How Friends and Family Can Help

• Do not speak unless you are in the same room with the listener.

• **Get the person’s attention** before you begin to speak to him or her. If necessary, call the person’s name or touch him or her lightly to attract their attention.

• Be sure the listener can see your face clearly. Do not stand in front of a light or window. The glare will make it difficult to for him or her to see your face.

• Do not turn or walk away while speaking.

• Do NOT shout. Speak at normal volume. Shouting distorts speech and makes it harder to understand.

• Speak at a **slow rate**. Don’t speak too fast. The faster you talk, the harder it is to understand.

• Speak clearly. Do NOT exaggerate movements of your mouth. This will distort speech.

• Do NOT speak directly into the listener’s ear.

• If the listener does not understand what you have said, rephrase the statement rather than simply repeating it.

• **Be patient.** Try not to get upset if you have to repeat things a lot. Hearing can fluctuate with days, times, attention, and moods.

• Talk in a quiet area. The noisier the room, the more difficulty the person will have in following a conversation.