

# LEARNING TO HEAR AGAIN TAKES PRACTICE

By Lorrie Matarazzo

People who embark on treating their hearing loss are initiating a path of rehabilitation that requires a person to learn a new set of skills. It takes the average person 5-7 years to have their hearing assessed from the time that they first notice issues with their hearing. Some wait much longer and learn to live with diminished hearing. In that timeframe, this hearing loss has caused them to forget certain sounds that someone with normal hearing will hear every day (some wanted and some unwanted). After years' worth of hearing at lower levels, the brain becomes accustomed to this lower volume and perceives this as the new "normal." Education and support through this rehabilitation process assist individuals in becoming familiar with these sounds again and helps them develop appropriate expectations and achieve success with their new hearing devices.



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Many have experienced being in a dimly lit restaurant for lunch on a sunny day. Upon leaving the restaurant and into the sunlight, it can be overwhelmingly bright. One will often shade their eyes or search for sunglasses in order to deal with the glaring effect of the sunlight. These challenges faced in adapting to changes in lighting can occur after only a few minutes!! Similarly, when an individual uses hearing aids for the first time, they have not heard the "brightness" of healthy hearing for many years. This situation may cause them to be overwhelmed by this new level of hearing and must also take time to adapt.

Helping individuals adjust to this new level of hearing is where the importance of a qualified hearing professional comes into play. By guiding clients through the process through education and support, the ability to adapt to increase and clarity in hearing will be a smoother and much more enjoyable experience.

The field of audiology and hearing aid technology have both experienced disruptive innovation over the last 20 years. Hearing aids of today are much more discreet, considerably more comfortable to wear, and often offer various options to allow clients to connect to their favourite wireless technologies—including televisions, cellular phones, tablets, and various music sources.

Adjusting to new hearing aids and new technologies is not an overnight process. However, with patience, commitment, and guidance, learning to hear again can be an enjoyable experience ensuring a better quality of life and day-to-day interactions therein.

As your hearing professional, we aim to *Connect People through Communication.*



The  
**Northern Hearing  
Health Centre**