

TOP 10 TIPS FROM A PRO ON HOW TO PURCHASE HEARING AIDS.

When You Are Looking To Buy Hearing Aids It Is Easy To Feel Swamped By The Sheer Amount Of Information.



1 See an Audiologist.

The most qualified and educated person to diagnose your hearing loss and fit your hearing aids is an Audiologist. If you don't see the word "Audiologist" or the initials Au.D. after the person's name, go someplace else. Don't believe me? See the hearing aid buying guide published by Consumer Reports. They got it right. <https://www.consumerreports.org/cro/hearing-aids/buying-guide/index.htm> Visit an audiologist who will carry out a complete hearing test in a sound treated room and diagnose your particular hearing loss. Hearing tests done by non-Audiologists are done for purposes of selling hearing aids only.



2 Call your insurance company to check your benefits.

Most people do not have insurance coverage for hearing aids. Many insurance companies just cover the cost of the exam. However, some insurance companies do provide money for hearing aids and/or a discount program that will direct you to an establishment that can get your hearing aids at a discount. Some of these establishments are good, and some are basically a marketing gimmick. Let your audiologist sort this out for you.

I strongly recommend you get the information from your health insurance company and then call your Audiologist directly. The Audiologist will be able to tell you the most effective way to use your hearing aid benefit/discount program for your maximum benefit. It's not uncommon to get a better deal by NOT using your insurance companies' particular program.



3 Find a local provider and do your research.

Find a local Audiologist that is established and has a good reputation. Ask friends and relatives who their audiologist is. Most people do this to find a good physician also.

Many flashy sales ads will tout how great the hearing aids will work for you but say little about the person or office actually fitting the hearing aids.

Has this office changed names and staff often? Many national brand offices are frequently bought and sold leaving the patient to deal with follow up issues years down the road. This can be extremely frustrating after spending thousands of dollars on hearing aids to find out that your provider is gone, and the new company has little or no experience with the model of hearing aid you are currently wearing. Does the local Big Box store have staff that changes often? Do they have hearing aid dealers instead of Audiologists working at the store? Who is fitting your hearing aids today? Tomorrow? Etc.... You want to avoid this.

There are 6 major hearing aid manufacturers in the world. Ask why a particular manufacturer is being used for you. Avoid hearing aid sales people and franchises that sell only one brand of hearing aid. Not all hearing aid companies can fit all hearing losses. The public has no way of knowing this. Your Audiologist will guide you.



4 Ask why a particular manufacturer is being used for you.

Do not purchase hearing aids or hearing devices from magazine ads or newspaper ads that make outrageous claims about how well these devices will work for you. Any hearing aid or device you purchase through the mail will most likely be a waste of your time and money. See an Audiologist and get a professional opinion on your specific hearing loss so you can find out what the best treatment plan is.

Be aware that flashy newspaper ads that have people wearing white lab coats do not make them Audiologists. Too many advertisements feature people pretending to be Audiology or Medical professionals to misrepresent what they will be providing in their offices. Get a local Audiologist to fit your hearing aids. This is the person that will be performing services for you for years down the road. Keep that person.



5 Know what you want for your hearing aid.

There are many additional extras that you can buy for your hearing aid. These are all useful add-ons which can help someone with hearing loss to lead the life that they are used to. However you need to make sure that they fit in with your lifestyle. For example, many hearing aids now connect directly to cell phones. This is a wonderful option for many people to take advantage of. However, if you are not a big cell phone user, you can potentially save money by purchasing a model that does not have this feature that you may not need. Telecoils are also an option in which some hearing aids can connect wirelessly to hearing loops that have been installed in many churches, theaters, and arena's.



6 Shop around.

It is a good idea to shop around when looking to buy a hearing aid so that you can compare prices and services. The main manufacturers are Widex, Oticon, Starkey, Resound, Signia (Siemens), and Phonak. Most national franchises get their hearing aids from one of these companies, re-label them, and charge outrageous fees to pay for their advertising budgets.

Many times you can get the same or better hearing aid technology in a local Audiologist's office at a cheaper price.



7 Get a demonstration and/or trial period.

Many Audiologists offer a free demonstration so that you can try the hearing aid out before you buy it. The aid can be programmed to your hearing loss and worn with a disposable tip. Many offices offer a trial period usually around 30 days where you can take the hearing aids home and have the option to return them if you are not satisfied.



8 Find out what's included in the cost including warranty and service.

At your appointment you should be offered a choice hearing aid types as well as some different brands. Ask questions about the features included with each one as well as optional extras.

Hearing aids are an expensive investment and you should always check exactly what is included in the warranty and aftercare service. Make sure that follow up appointments are included in your aftercare package.



9 Hearing Aids do not restore your hearing to normal.

As soon as Hearing aids cannot restore your hearing to normal nor are they perfect... they are used to AID you to better hearing.

Hearing aids are a great way to help you manage the negative effects of hearing loss but they are not a cure for hearing loss. As soon as you take the hearing aids off you will still have a hearing loss. However, waiting too long to start wearing hearing aids can have negative effects.

Several studies have shown that an untreated hearing loss (not wearing hearing aids when a hearing loss is detected) can result in increased anxiety, depression, memory loss, and may also be a risk factor for Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia.



10 Take someone with you to the appointment.

It is always a good idea to take someone with you to your appointment. When you are worrying about the results it is easy to miss what your Audiologist is saying. This is even more likely when you may have a hearing loss.



This guest blog was written by Seniorcare.ie and amended by Douglas Kloss, Audiologist at Wisconsin Hearing Aids, Inc. Dr. Kloss has been an Audiologist for 28 years.

He can be reached at
Wisconsin Hearing Aids, Inc.
1310 Mendota Street #113
Madison WI 53714
Tel: (608) 244-1221
Website: wisconsinhearingaids.com
Email: wisconsinhearingaids@gmail.com