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## Benefits of Better Hearing



# Intro

As social animals, humans need to be able to communicate in order to thrive. Hearing is key to creating and maintaining these vital interpersonal connections. As we lose our hearing, our ability to connect deteriorates, and the consequences can be dire.

Numerous studies show that living with untreated hearing loss can lead to a series of social, psychological and physical problems.<sup>1</sup> By treating hearing loss, you may be able to reverse some of these adverse developments and discover a world of other benefits.

From lowering your risk of depression and anxiety, to helping you fulfill your career goals, there are many reasons to regain control of your hearing. The team at HearingLife wants to help you discover 52 reasons why life is worth hearing.

## Improve your overall quality of life

There's no doubt about it. Improving your hearing can help you enjoy a higher quality of life. Admittedly, this is a bold statement, but it's supported by many studies<sup>2</sup>, which are remarkably consistent in their findings. Whether it be our ability to exchange information, connect with friends and family or fully engage with the world around us, hearing well is key to living well.

All this is to say — we're at our best when our hearing is at its best.



## Strengthen communication and improve your personal life

Hearing well means being able to communicate clearly with friends and loved ones. Rather than falling behind, filling in gaps through guessing or tuning out, when you hear well, you don't have to second-guess the world around you. Let's take a peek at the benefits better hearing can have on your personal life and social confidence:

### **3. Hearing well has an overall positive effect on relationships**

From friends and family, your neighbors and colleagues – even to that one-on-one time with a special someone – hearing better allows you to participate in more activities and be active in social gatherings. Treating hearing loss can have a positive effect on your relationships and social confidence.

### **4. Better hearing simply makes life easier**

Hearing loss not only frustrates the individual with hearing loss, but it can also do the same for the people around them, especially friends or loved ones. People who wear hearing aids experience better communication with the people in their lives, reducing the negative emotions associated with poor communication, such as anger and frustration.<sup>3</sup>

### **5. Hearing others' words improves bonds**

Feeling close and connected with our loved ones is key to our happiness. Being able to listen to each other through the ups and downs in life strengthens bonds and improves the warmth and intimacy in our closest relationships.

### **6. Your sex life may benefit from better hearing**

It's long been known that communication is key to a healthy sex life, and research backs this up. People have even reported that their sex life has improved significantly as a result of wearing hearing aids.<sup>4</sup>

## Improve your mental health

Not surprisingly, better hearing can have a profound impact on our mental well-being. Hearing aids may even help reverse potential emotional dysfunctions caused by untreated hearing impairment.<sup>5</sup> Here are some ways better hearing will improve your mental health:

### **8. Wearing hearing aids may reduce social isolation**

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) found that seniors with untreated hearing loss were less likely to participate in organized social activities than those who wear hearing aids.<sup>6</sup>

### **9. Successfully hearing others reduces depressive symptoms**

The same study concluded that seniors with hearing impairment were more likely to report depression and depressive symptoms.<sup>7</sup>

### **10. Addressing hearing loss may lessen anxiety**

People with hearing loss appear to be more prone to feelings of anxiety, according to the NCOA study. This may be because people with untreated hearing loss may be less sure of their surroundings and conversational abilities. Regaining control of your hearing, on the other hand, has been shown to reduce these feelings.<sup>8</sup>

### **11. Improved hearing may increase your openness to new things**

Treating your hearing loss simply makes it easier to participate in almost any aspect of your life. This, in turn, will make you more open to new experiences that can enrich it.

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## Better hearing helps your career

A study by the Better Hearing Institute revealed that hearing loss can pose a significant barrier to overall career success and lifetime earnings, and can cost upwards of \$30,000 in lost income every year.<sup>9</sup> But it doesn't end there. Let's take a look at some of the benefits that better hearing can have on your career:

### **13. Taking action shows you're a problem-solver at work**

Addressing your potential hearing impairment shows that you're willing to face challenges and you're willing to do what it takes to continue to be a valuable employee.

### **14. Wearing hearing aids is linked to higher employment**

Research shows that adults who treat their hearing loss have a higher employment rate, compared to those who don't.<sup>10</sup>

### **15. Treating hearing loss may help raise your earning potential**

The Better Hearing Institute revealed that the use of hearing aids can reduce the risk of income loss by 90-100 percent for adults with mild hearing loss, as well as by 65-77 percent for adults with moderate to severe hearing impairment.<sup>11</sup>

### **16. Hearing well helps you perform better at your job**

Improving your workplace communication can mean you work more efficiently; you can be more confident that you heard directions clearly, and you can feel more in touch with your co-workers.

## Attitudes have improved about treating hearing loss, so you are less self-conscious about treatment

In fact, surveys from 2009, 2012 and 2015 show a steady decline in the percentage of people with hearing impairment who report embarrassment over wearing hearing aids.<sup>12</sup> That's not all.

Today's hearing aids are smaller and come in more tailored designs than even a few years ago, giving wearers stylish, subtle

### 18. Build your confidence

The National Council on Aging conducted a survey that shows that using a hearing aid can account for a 39 percent increase in self-confidence and a 50 percent increase in self-image.<sup>13</sup>

### 19. Gain confidence in your listening skills

Having trouble hearing can be frustrating and may lead to feelings of sadness, confusion and self-criticism. Restoring your hearing can help reduce these negative feelings, as you can communicate easier and listen more effectively.

### 20. Hearing other people accurately helps reduce self-doubt

As friends and family voice their frustration when you mishear or can't hear them, you may pick up on this and blame yourself for causing the strain on an otherwise-healthy relationship.

### 21. Hearing well improves your feeling of safety

Although some noises, like a car's horn, can be scary, not hearing them at all is even scarier. Adults with hearing aids report that better hearing makes them feel safer and more secure, especially when they are alone.<sup>14</sup>

### 22. Improved hearing allows you to stay informed and regain the feeling of control

Missing key information may make you feel as if situations are beyond your control. Many people with hearing loss struggle to hear informational messages on loudspeakers.

At other times, it may be difficult to hear people in a meeting, so you miss the key takeaways. A hearing aid allows you to regain control in these situations and be more aware of your general surroundings.

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## Better hearing helps you stay connected

In our modern, digital society, the internet and smart devices have become nearly indispensable. Digitally advanced hearing aids connect wirelessly to your smartphone, tablet and many other devices.

### **24. Stream sound from the radio, podcasts and audiobooks without headphones**

Many hearing aids can integrate with iPhones®, iPads® and smart devices, provided you are listening via a Wi-Fi-capable device.

### **25. Connect to the sounds you love with Bluetooth® technology**

Bluetooth® technology embedded in hearing aids lets you effortlessly stream music, take phone calls and watch videos on your mobile device — and the sound goes right to your hearing aids.

### **26. Improved experience when using video chat**

Only a generation or two ago, video chatting seemed like science fiction. Today, apps like Skype, Messenger and FaceTime® allow individuals to connect with friends and family members who are abroad or who live far away. [Modern hearing aids](#) can even stream sound wirelessly when using video chat, making it easier to hear, providing a better experience.

## Improve your social life

Some people with untreated hearing loss report that they spend less time interacting with other people or partaking in social events.<sup>15</sup> Some may refrain for fear of burdening others by asking them to speak louder or repeat themselves; others report that they can't keep up with the conversation, making them lose interest in certain social activities.

This is problematic, because [staying socially engaged is vital for our overall health](#).<sup>16</sup> Wearing hearing aids helps users to enjoy the benefits of social activities:

### 28. Make group activities more rewarding

Whether you are taking a gardening class at a community center or enjoying your granddaughter's birthday party, hearing well makes group activities more rewarding.

### 29. Addressing hearing loss helps alleviate feelings of isolation in social gatherings

If you've ever been in a room full of people who speak a different language, you probably know what it's like to feel isolated from a conversation. Living with untreated hearing loss can feel like this on a daily basis. Not being able to follow discussions can be isolating. But with hearing aids, you can jump back into the action.

### 30. Reduce social phobias

Living with untreated hearing loss can lead to the development of social phobias, similar to the symptoms that people with mild cognitive impairment report. As people with hearing impairment develop trouble following conversations, a fear of participating or saying something "stupid" may develop if hearing loss goes untreated.<sup>17</sup>

### 31. Treating hearing loss reduces paranoia

Untreated hearing loss has been linked to higher instances of paranoia, leading sufferers to believe

others are mad at them or dislike them. The worse the hearing loss, the more prevalent the tendency. Conversely, treating your hearing loss can reduce feelings of paranoia.<sup>18</sup>

### 32. Feel more involved

If you can't hear well, it can be difficult to be involved in certain activities, like card games or dinners in restaurants. Addressing hearing loss can make you feel more empowered and give you the confidence to participate the next time you are asked to join in on a game, go to the movies, or go out to eat.

### 33. Hearing better inspires you to be more social

Just as hearing loss often results in negative social experiences, good hearing can lead to conversational and social success – which may encourage you to seek out more social events.

### 34. You may meet new people

When you don't hear well, it may feel "safer" to stay within your current social circle, who know they need to speak louder or act as a "translator," to explain what's being said around you. By treating your hearing loss, you'll feel more confident speaking with new people.<sup>19</sup>

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## People with hearing loss experience a 30-40% faster decline in cognitive function

Several studies have pointed to the correlation between hearing loss and cognitive decline. One study by Johns Hopkins University found that those with hearing loss experienced a 30-40 percent faster decline in cognitive function compared to those with normal hearing.<sup>20</sup> Another major study recently found that older adults with untreated hearing loss have an estimated 50 percent greater risk of developing dementia.<sup>21</sup>

Researchers have stated that hearing loss is a potentially modifiable risk factor for dementia; meaning that intervention, through hearing aids, may reduce your chances of developing dementia.<sup>22</sup> That's why experts recommend taking immediate action against any degree of hearing loss, in order to preserve cognitive function.

### 36. Treating hearing loss reduces risk of dementia

As mentioned above, we know that there's a correlation between cognitive decline and hearing impairment. Thankfully, though, we also know that wearing a hearing aid reduces the risk of this happening. According to a 25-year-long study published by The Lancet Commission on Dementia Prevention and Care, treating hearing loss is the most important change we can make mid-life to reduce our chances of developing dementia.<sup>22</sup>

### 37. Hearing better frees up mental capacity

Imagine what a struggle it can be for the brain to constantly strain to understand what's being said, due to difficulties hearing the words clearly. It takes up a lot of brainpower. This is because when you experience hearing loss, you must tap into your cognitive reserves to understand.<sup>23</sup> Using a hearing aid can alleviate the stress on your brain caused by trying to hear. Best of all, you won't be left feeling mentally exhausted.

## Improve your physical health

We all know that staying active has a positive effect on our physical health. Surprisingly though, users of hearing aids tend to be more active than people with untreated hearing loss. Hearing well is associated with better balance, too.

### 39. Better hearing may make it easier for you to exercise

The negative cognitive effects associated with [untreated hearing loss](#) can impact our ability to perform various physical exercises. Wearing hearing aids, on the other hand, can help reduce some of the stress on the brain, positively affecting other brain functions, such as localization, balance and coordination skills.<sup>24</sup>

### 40. Hearing better may reduce the risk of falls

The risk of falling can be a serious concern as we age. The older we get, the more likely we are to become seriously injured by a fall. According to researchers at Washington University in St. Louis, wearing hearing aids regularly can reduce the risk of physical

injuries due to falls by “Using the sound information coming through [the] hearing aids as auditory reference points or landmarks to help maintain balance.”<sup>25</sup> Another study from 2013 found that people who wear hearing aids have a 1.4 times lower risk of being injured in a fall than their untreated counterparts.<sup>26</sup>

### 41. Reduce your risk of having a stroke

Treating your hearing loss could enable you to live longer. An American study from 2018 by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health found a 30 percent increased risk of stroke and a 36 percent increased risk of heart attack among the participants with untreated hearing loss, compared to those without hearing loss.<sup>27</sup>

## Better hearing simply makes life easier

From watching TV and talking on the phone, to avoiding unnecessary arguments, improving your hearing will most certainly make your life easier. Here are some of the everyday benefits related to better hearing:

### 43. Improve your ability to concentrate

Many people find joy in being able to immerse themselves in a hobby, interest or project. Certain hobbies are more difficult with untreated hearing loss, as the brain works overtime every day to process unclear words and conversations. When your brain doesn't have to waste resources on trying to understand speech, it makes it easier to concentrate on the task at hand.

### 44. Treating hearing loss can reduce arguments and misunderstandings

Untreated hearing loss can lead to misunderstandings, friction, and even to arguments. Sometimes a person with hearing loss may sense that their family and friends are annoyed or upset with them. At other times, people may avoid having a conversation, as communication can be frustrating. Family and loved ones may feel burdened by having to repeat themselves or may even feel ignored. Choosing to treat hearing loss often proves to be a great relief for all parties involved.

### 45. Makes watching TV with others more enjoyable

When you suffer from hearing loss, it can prove to be a challenge to watch TV and movies with people who have normal hearing. Disagreements over how loud the sound can

be, or whether to have closed captions on can make for an unpleasant experience. Addressing your hearing loss can allow you to watch movies with family and friends at a volume that everyone can enjoy.

### 46. You'll be able to hear the doorbell

Hearing someone knocking at the door is challenging with hearing loss. [You won't miss visitors if you have the right hearing aids for you](#). In fact, with the right doorbell, certain hearing aids can alert you when someone rings the bell.

### 47. Treating hearing loss may prevent wage disparity

Unfortunately, research shows that adults with hearing loss, on average, earn less than their peers with normal hearing and are more likely to experience underemployment or unemployment.<sup>28</sup>

### 48. No more "embarrassing" moments

Have you found yourself feeling embarrassed after a misunderstanding in a meeting? Maybe you didn't hear when someone called your name? In time, though, these situations turn from funny to frustrating, and a person with hearing loss may begin to withdraw in order to avoid them. Treating your hearing loss can help you prevent these embarrassing misunderstandings and reclaim your conversational confidence.

## Savor life's special moments

Sound has a profound place in how we experience the world around us. Whether it is listening to the drizzle of rain, the soothing sound of an autumn wind, the sound of waves hitting the beach or the mumbling of a family member's first words, we're all familiar with the wonders of sound. Perhaps the most rewarding benefit of better hearing is how you can

### 50. You'll be able to hear birds and other wildlife again

Chirping and singing birds can bring such joy on a sunny spring morning. Walking along a wooded path, you'll hear the rustling of little creatures, like squirrels or chipmunks skittering away, or the wind blowing through the trees. These sounds bring a peaceful and restorative feeling for almost anyone. When you treat hearing loss, one of the most enjoyable benefits is that you can rediscover nature's sounds. Even if you don't particularly enjoy nature, you may be grateful to hear a mosquito's high-pitched tone... which serves as a warning.

### 51. Rediscover your favorite music

Giving yourself the gift of better hearing will enable you to rediscover your favorite music. For many people with age-related or sensorineural hearing loss, higher-pitched tones are the first to go. You may not notice it, but in a sense, it can be like losing the sopranos of a choir or the flute section in a band. For others, hearing loss means that music can sound distorted. Hearing aids can bring back a richness to the missing notes and help you to hear songs as they "used to sound" to you. Many hearing aids even allow you to stream music directly into your ears, giving an even more fulfilling experience without using bulky headphones.

### 52. Connect more deeply with children and grandchildren

Our children and grandchildren are one of life's most precious gifts, but sometimes hearing loss can get in the way of understanding them. This is particularly true of smaller children, who may speak in soft or high-pitched voices – or may mumble and mispronounce words. This shouldn't get in the way of your ability to connect with them, though. Treating your hearing loss can help ensure that you get the most out of your relationships with children and grandchildren.

### 53. Reconnect with your passions

We now know that hearing loss can affect us beyond the obvious role it plays in communication. From taking up that musical instrument again to playing your weekly tennis game, don't let your hearing loss prevent you from living your best life – no matter what your passion may be.

Studies show that hearing loss can affect our cognition, psychological state, physical health, balance, relationships, work life and so much more. Not hearing at your best keeps you from living life to the fullest and pursuing the things that make you happy.





# Take action against your hearing loss today

There's no reason you should be living with **untreated hearing loss**, and there are at least 53 reasons why you should be doing something about it. **The path to reclaiming your hearing is easier than you think**, and we'd be delighted to help you along the way. Take the first step today by booking a **complimentary hearing assessment\*** at a **HearingLife location near you**.

[Request an appointment](#)

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\*The purpose of this hearing assessment and/or demonstration is for hearing wellness and to determine if the consumer may benefit from using hearing aids, which may include selling and fitting hearing aids. Products demonstrated may differ from products sold. Assessment conclusion is not a medical diagnosis and further testing may be required to diagnose hearing loss. The use of any hearing aid may not fully restore normal hearing and does not prevent future hearing loss. Hearing instruments may not meet the needs of all hearing-impaired individuals. One offer per consumer and offer cannot be combined with any of our promotional offers, coupons or discounts. Offer not available to any consumer who has private or federal health insurance coverage. Other terms may apply, see office for details.