

## How to help yourself hear better

Having suffered hearing loss, we all know how this feels. Each situation you find yourself in is different. There are these important tips to follow to help yourself.

**When in a one to one conversation** make sure you face the person directly. Place yourself in a position where the light is showing on the other persons face. Whilst in conversation try to be three feet away from the other persons face. A wall or corner behind you is even better. You can block out any unnecessary noise from behind plus remain in the one place. All this becomes second nature with practice.

If you're out with friends, again **position yourself** with your back to the window light, also try to position yourself to allow yourself to hear more with your better ear. Face away from the window light, try to see as many faces as you can full on. A round table is best suited for these occasions. Try and sit away from the kitchen and coffee machines. This might sound daunting, but all this is possible.

**Anticipate the situation you are going to encounter.** What are they likely to ask you? If a number or date is mentioned ask the person to either write it down. Dates and times are difficult, many occasions just ask, "Did you say two thousand and one zero?" Or "did you say one six? Etc. Repeat back what you think you have heard, always be precise. Sixteen, sixth, fifteen or fifth, eighteen or eighty all look the same on the lips. Even eight nine and ten could be confused. **Ask the person not to shout** if they think you haven't heard them. Tell them you suffer from hearing loss. There is nothing shameful in admitting this.

**Always keep up with the news,** if you are going anywhere anticipate the context of sentences that might be said. How much do we hear?

There are more problems in a restaurant. **Hearing is difficult with Loud back ground noise, music, no soft furnishing, clattering cutlery and crockery, the coffee machine, chatter, scraping chairs.**

The louder someone talks the louder everyone talks.

Questions such: as What would you like to drink?

Have made your choice?

You're not in the Dentist, so the waiter or waitress certainly won't say "open wide and put your head back!

Try and sit away from the coffee machine and kitchen.

**Again, try and place yourself in any one given situation. So, it is the Context of sentences you are likely to recognise. Being Assertive recognising the questions.**

### **Having Confidence**

Explain you suffer from hearing loss if you need to. If it's family they can get irritated and say turn your deaf aid up, of course you can't. It's not shameful suffering from hearing loss.

It's a fact **your'e not daft you're deaf!! All this awareness of the situation is encouraging.**

**Mental agility, Memory, Concentration.**

Try and keep up with the news. Practice new words. Above all keep your brain active. You'll come to recognise these **Speech movements.**

**Try this experiment,** when you're by yourself look in the mirror and try out these negative and positive words and watch your own reaction. Convinced? Look at the eyes and body movements. **Negative or positive** words look different. Say "didn't" without voice there is a slight shake of the head. Then say "did" Notice the slight nod of the head.

All this practice and awareness, your self-esteem will suddenly grow. Most importantly you will get your self esteem will return together with a great sense of humour as you begin to notice more around you.

We must not shut ourselves off. It's hard work at the beginning, but shutting yourself off encourages isolation, depression and illness, it can even encourage Alzheimer's.

**There is plenty of help and understanding, more than you could imagine.**

The Guildford Hard of Hearing Group is very welcoming and friendly. You will enjoy meeting like-minded people with lots of tips. Our experienced Lip-reading teacher holds a one hour session, she is very kind and eases you into the practice of learning to lip read. As you grow in confidence and come to learn more skills, communication becomes much easier.