



# Guide to better hearing

What you need to know.

The following information is presented for educational purposes only and should never replace the advice of a hearing care professional.

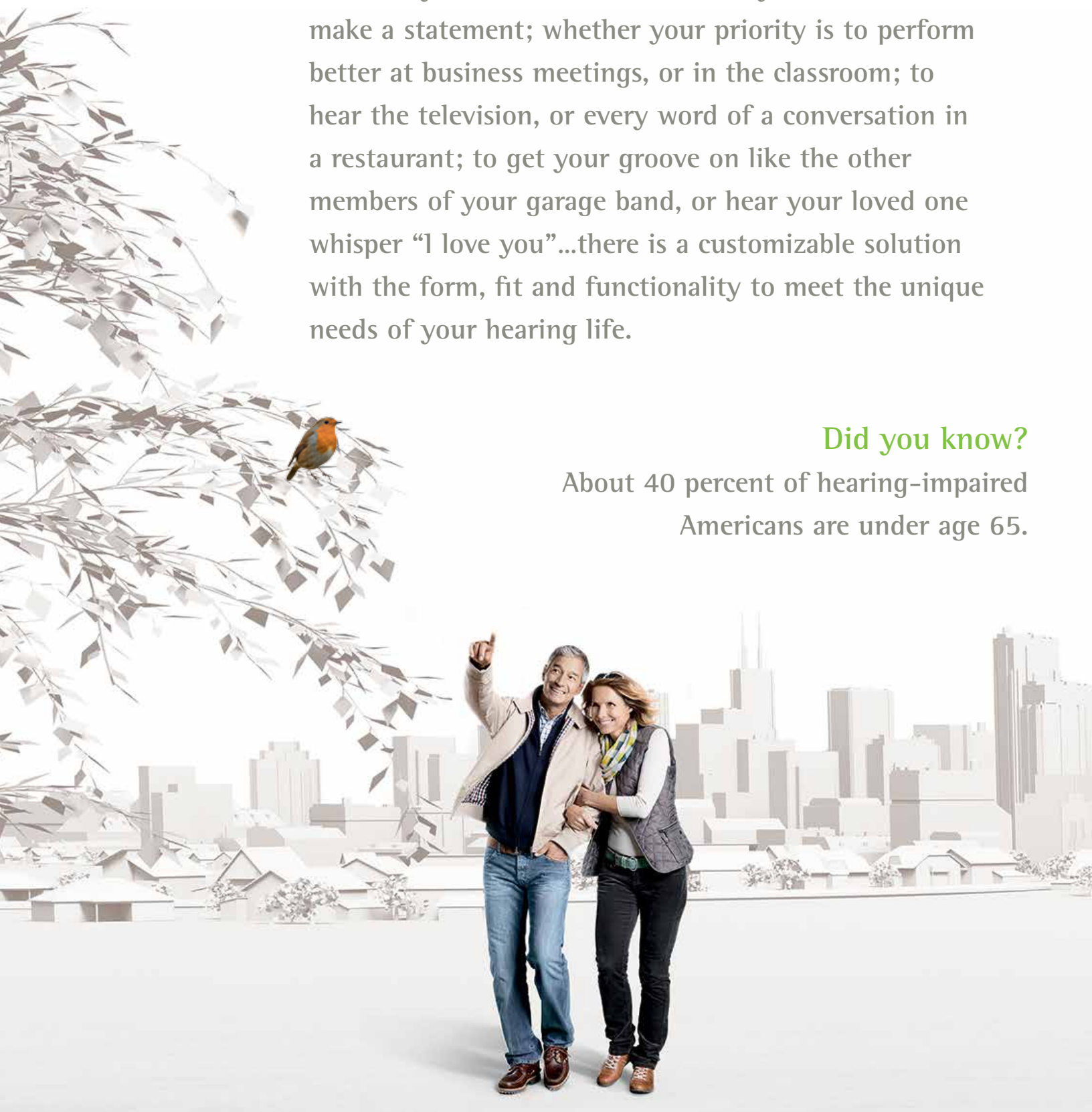
**PHONAK**  
life is on

## Your Ears, Your Life

Whether you want to be discreet, or you want to make a statement; whether your priority is to perform better at business meetings, or in the classroom; to hear the television, or every word of a conversation in a restaurant; to get your groove on like the other members of your garage band, or hear your loved one whisper “I love you”...there is a customizable solution with the form, fit and functionality to meet the unique needs of your hearing life.

### Did you know?

About 40 percent of hearing-impaired Americans are under age 65.



## Hearing loss – a fact of life for baby boomers

Now the largest segment of American society, Baby Boomers have endured a greater increase in noise pollution than any other generation. Prolonged or loud noise exposure seems to have overtaken age as the leading cause of hearing loss.

Add to that the fact that Baby Boomers will live longer than any previous generation, and you have the largest number of people ever to face this problem. In fact, about 40 percent of hearing-impaired Americans are under age 65.

Hearing is essential to fully enjoying and participating in life, but one in 10 Americans – more than 31 million people – experience some degree of hearing loss. This makes it our nation's third most prevalent chronic health condition, after arthritis and high blood pressure.

**How do you know if you have a hearing loss? Ask yourself these questions...and answer them truthfully!**

- Do you have to turn the volume up on the television?
- Do you hear, but not necessarily understand what others are saying?
- Do you have trouble following conversations in busy places?
- Do you often ask people to repeat sentences?

**Hearing aids can provide quality-of-life benefits.**

In the February 2007 Journal of the American Academy of Audiology, a task force report was published that carefully reviewed four years of data and 75 research articles on the social, economic and psychological effects of hearing loss and the impact of hearing aids. The 33-page report can be summed up by one sentence taken from its conclusion: "Hearing aid use greatly improves adults' health-related quality of life by reducing psychological, social and emotional effects of hearing loss – an insidious and potentially devastating chronic health condition." The report also adds that hearing aids, when properly fit by a licensed hearing care professional, are a low-risk treatment that consumers can try at little or no cost to address a condition for which there is no other "viable treatment."



# Hearing aid styles

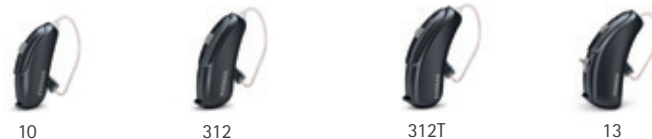


## Behind-the-ear (BTE) and Receiver-in-the-canal (RIC)

BTE and RIC hearing aids are housed in a durable case that rests on the back of the outer ear. These styles can address a wide range of hearing losses. They come with a variety of sizes and colors that blend with skin and hair color. The majority of our hearing aid wearers choose BTE/RIC for this reason.

For many hearing losses, BTE/RIC hearing aids can be fit as an open-fit device. Open-fit hearing aids are typically smaller than traditional BTE style hearing aids. They contain a thin plastic tube that extends over the outer ear and into the ear canal. It is virtually invisible. In addition to being cosmetically appealing, the open-fit tube avoids the occlusion or plugged up feeling.

### Audéo V



### Bolero V



## In-the-ear (ITE)

ITE hearing aids come in a variety of sizes from the discrete invisible-in-the-canal (IIC) to the more powerful full shell (FS) styles. Just like BTE/RIC hearing aids, ITE hearing aids are appropriate for individuals with a wide range of hearing losses. Each Phonak ITE hearing aid is individually designed based on your ear geometry to provide a perfect fit. Because each hearing aid is made to order, you can choose options like volume controls and push buttons.



## Lyric: Extended Wear Hearing Instrument

The world's first invisible extended-wear hearing device. Lyric lasts for months without replacement, changing of batteries and no maintenance. Lyric's unique design and placement works with your ear's anatomy to deliver exceptional sound quality in quiet and noisy environments.\*



*\*Individual replacement needs may vary. Duration of device battery life varies by patient and is subject to individual ear conditions.*

## One hearing aid or two?

The benefit of wearing two hearing aids, as opposed to wearing one, can usually be determined by asking two questions:

**Can hearing in both ears be improved by amplification? And, does the wearer want to understand others as well as possible in a variety of environments?**

If the answer to both questions is yes, there can be a tremendous benefit to wearing two hearing aids instead of one. This is known as a binaural fitting.

**Binaural fittings offer the following advantages:**

- Greater speech understanding in noisy environments
- Improved ability to locate a sound source
- Consistent stimulation of the entire auditory system, leading to improved understanding of speech

Research shows that binaural hearing aid fittings give greater speech understanding in difficult listening conditions. Our brain uses the input from the two ears to make sense of the sound, which allows us to understand voices in a crowded room. This can only be achieved with balanced hearing.

Binaural hearing also helps determine where a voice originates. As it interprets the world, the brain adds together the perception of loudness from both ears. With a single hearing aid, if the sound coming into the ears is unbalanced, the wearer may not be able to determine immediately the location of the speaker.

With hearing aids in both ears, this loudness-summing capability means the volume in each hearing aid does not have to be turned up as high. Less amplification means less unwanted, amplified background noise. Research and patient experience tell us overwhelmingly that wearing two hearing aids is better than wearing one.



# Frequently asked questions about hearing aids

## What is the best hearing aid on the market?

The best hearing aid is the one that suits an individual's unique lifestyle and hearing loss. Your local hearing care professional will be happy to educate you about various options and help select the right model for you.

## Why has the open-fit hearing aid style become so popular?

Open-fit hearing aids offer comfort, no plugged up feeling while wearing them and discreet size. This category of hearing aid has been widely available for over 8 years and has become the preferred choice of people affected by hearing loss. Originally designed to fit only high frequency hearing loss, open-fit styles are now even smaller and can fit a wide range of hearing difficulty.

## How much do hearing aids cost?

Hearing aids have a very wide price range and almost 90 percent of people are fit with two devices. Pricing depends on the style and technology level recommended for an individual's hearing loss and lifestyle needs. This is determined after a hearing test is completed.

## Can I use Bluetooth devices such as mobile phones with hearing aids?

Yes, many hearing aids now have integrated Bluetooth systems accessible through wireless accessories.

In addition, Phonak offers EasyCall. This device connects to any Bluetooth® cellphone and streams the call direct to your hearing instruments.



Call us today at 1-855-529-4001

## What is a digital hearing aid?

Digital hearing aids represent the most advanced technology available today and allow for precise prescriptive fitting. More than 95 percent of all hearing aids sold are digital. These instruments contain a tiny custom programmed chip and offer the best way to match a particular patient's hearing loss with the precise amplification needed. Their unique technology separates the incoming sound into discreet bands or channels, each of which can be processed independently.

## What features should I look for in a hearing aid?

A number of feature combinations lead to increased satisfaction. Typically, hearing aid wearers are most satisfied with a hearing aid that includes the following features:

- **Directional Microphones.** These improve speech understanding in noisy environments by using two microphones to better separate unwanted sounds behind the wearer from the important speech sounds in front of the wearer.
- **Multiple Compression Channels.** These react quickly enough to increase the volume for crucial speech sounds, lower it for louder ambient noises and protect the wearer from sudden loud sounds like slamming doors.
- **Multiple Programs.** Also called memories, these let the wearer change the manner in which the hearing aid processes sound when moving from one environment to another, providing more control over various listening situations.
- **Noise Reduction.** This makes listening to speech more comfortable in difficult or noisy situations, as well as reducing wind noise when outside. Noise reduction is available in different levels of technology and can vary in its effectiveness. Therefore, it is important to understand that having noise reduction in hearing aids does not mean background noise is eliminated.
- **Feedback Cancellation.** Annoying whistling or squealing sounds are virtually eliminated with this digital feature, allowing for greater clarity of important speech.

## **I've worn hearing aids before. Will the newer digital hearing aid features help me?**

In the past two years, we have seen tremendous advances in hearing aid features. This has led to consumer satisfaction rates reaching an all-time high. Most consumers want technology to help them hear better when background noise is present and to minimize feedback.

Some newer hearing aid features include, but are not limited to, data-logging, automatic program changes, use of remote control and digital feedback suppression. If you are a previous hearing aid wearer, you should contact your local hearing care professional to learn more about these features and if they may be appropriate for your needs.

## **Will my hearing become worse if I wait to buy hearing aids?**

For years we have known that aging and noise exposure take their toll on our ability to hear. This is true whether or not we use hearing aids.

However, research shows that the ability to make sense of what we hear deteriorates more rapidly if the hearing pathway is not stimulated. Therefore, a decision to delay being fit with hearing aids will not cause hearing to become worse, but it may make it more difficult to adapt and benefit from hearing aids later on.

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## **Taking the next step – a hearing test**

Together with your hearing care professional we are here to guide you on your journey to better hearing and to make sure you get what's best for you.

### **You talk**

On your first visit, you do the talking and we'll do the listening! We want to hear about how your hearing has changed and understand the challenges you're facing. Once we do that, we can decide what steps to take next.

### **We're Listening**

The second step is a hearing test, which will allow us to actually see what you hear! We will assess your hearing as you wear earphones and listen for a sequence of tones. Simply let us know when you hear a tone. The result is recorded on an audiogram. Once we establish what you're hearing, we can start defining what areas you should be hearing too and commit ourselves to finding the best solution for your hearing loss.

### **Let's decide**

We take things like your family, work and social life into consideration before deciding which hearing solution is right for you. It's important for us to help you find a solution that's going to successfully cater to you and your specific needs.

### **Reconnecting**

If you don't use it, you lose it! Like many things in life, the same applies to your hearing. The longer you wait to address your hearing, the more difficult it is to regain the hearing that you've lost. That's where hearing aids come in. These incredible little computers are designed to help you locate, identify and reconnect to sound.

### **Adjusting**

Once you get reconnected, the fine tuning begins. Since your hearing aids are customized to fit your needs, they need to be optimized to make sure you stay tuned in, regardless of your whereabouts.



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# Life is on

We are sensitive to the needs of everyone who depends on our knowledge, ideas and care. And by creatively challenging the limits of technology, we develop innovations that help people hear, understand and experience more of life's rich soundscapes.

**Interact freely. Communicate with confidence.**

**Live without limit. Life is on.**

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