



## 10 STEPS TO BETTER HEARING HEALTH

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Do you have trouble hearing? You aren't alone. 1 out of 3 Americans over 65 has hearing loss, making it the 3rd most prevalent health condition among older adults (HLAA 2013). Hearing loss can make it harder for you to stay on top of your health and feel connected to family, friends, and the greater community.

Recent studies have also suggested that hearing loss may increase our risk for memory loss. Yet few of us realize that even mild hearing impairment can “age” our intellectual performance, in some reports by as much as 7 years. While the relationship between hearing loss and dementia is not completely understood, in part it may be due to lost opportunities to engage in the many activities we know protect our brain health and help us age well.

The good news is there is much we can do to improve both our hearing and brain health! Follow the 10 tips below to take better care of your hearing health.

- 1. CHECK OUT YOUR HEARING!** Hearing checks are easy and painless. Find a specialist in your area and get your hearing checked today.

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2. **TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEARING.** Protect your hearing health. Wear earplugs in noisy settings, move to a quiet corner to converse, and turn down the radio or TV when in conversation.
3. **TAP INTO HEARING TECH.** If you have hearing loss, be sure to take advantage of new technologies to help you stay connected. Check out resources such as aids controlled via a phone app, or captioned phones.
4. **LIVE WITH YOUR HEARING AND YOUR BRAIN IN MIND.** Everyday decisions such as how much sleep we get and how we manage our medical conditions can impact our attention, including our auditory perception and discrimination.
5. **STAY SOCIAL!** Make plans with family and friends - be sure to keep your social life active. Socializing offers us chances to keep our hearing, and our thinking, sharp. This can be especially important if you have hearing challenges, which can sometimes lead to isolation and loneliness.
6. **MOVE MORE.** Studies show aerobic activity may be one of the best things we can do for our brains, as well as for our hearing health. Make an exercise plan with friends and keep moving.
7. **STRETCH YOUR MIND.** Staying mentally challenged has been linked to reducing our risk for serious memory loss. You can boost the auditory benefit of these activities by choosing ones that challenge your listening skills as well as your mind, such as classes, books on tape, or going to lectures or concerts.

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8. **PLAY AGAINST THE CLOCK.** Timed games provide a great work out for our thinking skills. Download fun games to your phone or dust off the Boggle set for some great brain-tuning!
  
9. **STRATEGIZE!** Memory strategies can rev up our recall and can help us compensate if faced with hearing challenges by making it easier to learn information the first time we hear it. Try this: Repeat something aloud or come up with a silly story to make things you want to recall more memorable.
  
10. **SOOTHE AWAY STRESS.** Stress can make it harder to learn new things and may increase dementia risk over the long-term. Find a way to balance stress by listening to music, talking with friends, or practicing meditation.