

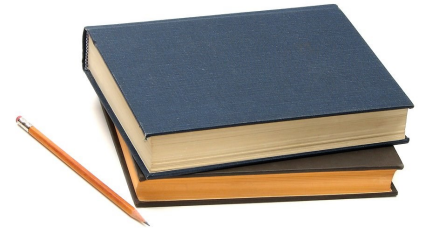


The Hearing Herald

18th Edition
October 2024

Back to the Basics!

Today's hearing aids are more sophisticated (and complex) than ever. They can scan your environment and make automatic adjustments based on what you are listening to in any given situation (quiet, noise, or music). Hearing aids can stream phone calls and other audio from your smart phone, computer, or television to both ears. While all of these features have benefits, it can leave you feeling overwhelmed about what you actually *need*. This issue of *The Hearing Herald* is going back to the basics to help you decide which features are essential based on your unique hearing loss and listening needs.



Digital hearing aid technology - Unlike analog hearing aids of the past that amplified all sounds equally, digital hearing aids are programmed for your prescriptive hearing loss using computer algorithms to prescribe gain for soft, medium, and loud sounds and separate speech from noise.

- The number of **channels (frequency bands)** varies according to level of technology. Like an equalizer on a stereo (with sliders for base and treble), more channels allow for a better match to the degree and configuration of your hearing loss. More channels also provides better control of background noise without affecting speech.
- The amount of **gain** depends on the severity of hearing loss and determines candidacy for different styles of hearing aids (in-the-ear versus behind-the-ear) or need for custom earmolds to avoid **feedback** (whistling).
- Need for **noise management** is dictated by your ability to understand speech in noise as well as your lifestyle. Adaptive directional microphones and automatic sound classification are examples of noise management features available in most hearing aids.
- Most current hearing aids offer **Bluetooth** connectivity for most smartphones. **Telecoil** options also are available for phone use or loop systems, such as that used at the Tanger Center in Greensboro. These features are available in most models (even basic technology) except some rechargeables and smaller in-the-ear devices.

Noise Noise
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 Noise Noise **Speech** Noise Noise
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 Noise Noise

Difficulty understanding in noise?

The most common struggle reported by people with hearing loss is listening in background noise. However, the degree of loss does not always determine how much a person struggles. Even mild hearing loss can cause speech-in-noise difficulty that is impactful.

Ask your audiologist for a speech-in-noise test to help determine if advanced hearing aid features may help to reduce listening effort and improve your communication.

Advanced Hearing Aid Technology

Advanced features optimize the way your hearing aid works in challenging listening situations when basic technology may not be enough. But, how do you know if you really need them? Check out this summary of the latest advanced features in our “back to basics” review:

Deep Neural Networking

Hearing aids are trained in millions of listening situations to make automatic adjustments to optimize speech understanding in real time.

Oticon and Phonak Hearing Instruments

Artificial Intelligence

Machine learning of your listening preferences in your listening environments, enables the hearing aids to become customized for you.

Phonak, Oticon, and Starkey hearing instruments

“Real-Time Conversation Enhancement”

Hearing aids use timing cues to determine turn taking and identify who (and where) your communication partners are.

Signia Advanced and Premium Hearing Instruments

Motion Sensors

Hearing aids track your head movements to determine if you are fixated on a single talker or moving back and forth between multiple conversation partners

Oticon, Signia, and Phonak Hearing instruments

Echo/Wind Reduction

Premium products offer features to reduce the negative effects of echoes and wind noise on sound quality.

Widex SmartRic and most premium technology

AuraCast™ / Low Energy (LE) Bluetooth

A new universally available streaming option is coming! AuraCast allows people to receive audio streaming from a multitude of sources, like TVs or public announcement (PA) systems, directly to their audio devices and hearing aids without background noise interference.

Resound Hearing Instruments are AuraCast ready. A Samsung Galaxy S23 or S24 is required.

Own Voice Processing

Hearing aids are calibrated to the sound of your own voice based on timing differences arriving at the ear.

Signia Hearing Instruments

Music Processing

Special features are available for musicians or music lovers to provide a high fidelity sound.

Widex, Oticon, and Signia hearing instruments

Disclaimer: Not all hearing aid manufacturers offer all of these advanced features and some are unique to the industry. Audiologists at UNCG Speech and Hearing Center work with all of the “big six” manufacturers for this reason.

Still have questions? Your audiologist can help you decide which features are most important for your listening needs. Call **336-334-5939**.



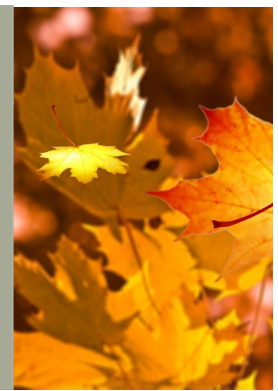
What Is an Audiologist?

au·di·ol·o·gist \ô-dē-'ä-lə-jist\ noun

The professional who specializes in evaluating, diagnosing, and treating people with hearing loss and balance disorders.

October Is National Audiology Awareness Month

American Academy of Audiology | www.HowsYourHearing.org



Your **UNCG audiologist** is a **doctoral-level professional** who can help guide you regarding the **basic and advanced features** that are required based on your unique hearing profile. We are committed to staying up to date with the latest in hearing aid technology by investing in continuing education. We also take into account your listening needs including how often you are in different types of situations and the impact of hearing difficulty on your daily activities. You may be asked to complete questionnaires like the **Hearing Handicap Inventory for Adults (HHIA)** or the **Vanderbilt Fatigue Scale for Adults (VLF-A)** to evaluate listening-related fatigue.



Your **speech-in-noise difficulty** is another key factor when prescribing hearing aid technology. Basic hearing tests evaluate your ability to recognize words in quiet. However, it also is important to know how well you hear in background noise. Speech-in-noise tests ask you to repeat words or sentences in varying levels of competition. A new test called the **Audible Contrast Threshold (ACT)** determines your ability to separate two non-speech sounds, which can be used to program some hearing instruments. Ask your audiologist for more information!

Once hearing aids have been prescribed for your needs, the next essential step is **professional fitting and verification**. While over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids may provide an affordable option for some people with mild to moderate hearing loss, they only work as well as they are fitted. The same is true for “prescription” hearing aids. The expertise of your audiologist to fit and adjust your hearing aids matters. In addition, “real ear” measures are essential for ensuring both safety and audibility of your devices.



Regular follow ups every 4 - 6 months are needed to clean and check your hearing aids and update the firmware to ensure optimum performance of your devices. Dirt, debris, and substances like hair spray, lotion, or ear wax can clog the microphones or speakers leading to weak or distorted hearing aids. Also, moisture buildup due to sweating and humidity can compromise sound quality and contribute to shorter battery life. **Redux treatments** can significantly improve the sound quality of your hearing aids.

DEVICES THOUGHT TO BE DEAD:	DEVICES THAT SOUND WEAK:	DEVICES THAT SOUND GOOD:	<p align="center">Schedule an appointment today</p> <p align="center">for a clean/check and ask your audiologist for a FREE Redux treatment for your hearing aids to optimize sound quality (\$25 value)!</p> <p align="center">Call 336-334-5939.</p>
50% REVIVED	82% IMPROVED	80% IMPROVED	

Give the Gift of Hearing: Your Old Hearing Aids Can Make a World of Difference!

Have you recently upgraded your hearing aid technology? If so, your old devices could still have an incredible impact! At **UNCG Speech and Hearing Center**, we believe that everyone deserves to hear better, regardless of their financial situation. That's why we are proud to accept used hearing aids for donation. Your gently used devices can be fitted to someone in need, offering them the chance to reconnect with their world.

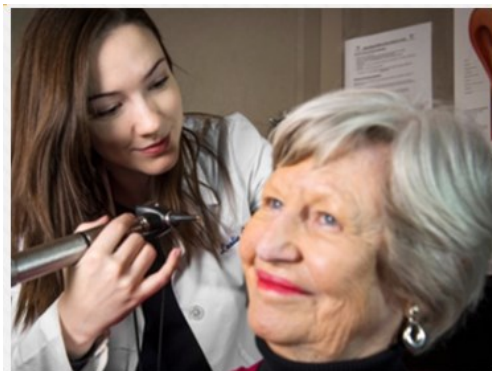


Interested in donating? Donating your old hearing aids is a simple act of kindness that can change someone's life. Just drop them off at our office, and we'll take care of the rest! As a non-profit, we can provide you a receipt for tax purposes.

To those who have donated, **thank you** for helping us make hearing health care more accessible to everyone in our community. As one patient writes, *"I'm so happy you were able to find a way to use the devices - especially when they can have such an impact on someone's ability and desire to socialize with others."*

If you don't have hearing aids to donate, but would still like to help those in need, you can **make a gift** to the UNCG Speech and Hearing Center fund. Your tax-deductible donation can honor a loved one, recognize exceptional service, help support a cause, or expand our community outreach. A contribution of any amount can make a difference.

Donate today to the **UNCG Speech and Hearing Center Giving Fund**: <https://shc.uncg.edu/giving-fund/>



Show gratitude for exceptional service

Meet our Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) Interns



Ashley Argo, M.S. (she/her) is an Au.D student from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center with a bachelor's degree in American Sign Language and Deaf studies. Her professional interests include tinnitus, pediatric audiology, and vestibular disorders. Outside of the office, Ashley can be found exploring Greensboro, learning to play the ukulele, or spending time with her two spoiled cats, Simon and Salem.



Lysander Ideker, B.A. (he/him) is an Au.D. student at Indiana University Bloomington. His professional interests include diagnostic testing and hearing aids, vestibular testing and treatment, and tinnitus treatment. Lysander grew up in Shanghai, China and has adopted a cat named Apple.