



Independent Hearing Care Services

Hearability information sheet

MOBILE TELEPHONES

Many hard of hearing people use mobile phones as they provide the independence and freedom to keep in touch on the move.

Whether you use a hearing aid or not, using a mobile phone has its challenges. However, there are plenty of ways to overcome these and the future of mobile technology will work in favour of hearing impaired people. As with ordinary telephones, the ability to hear clearly depends on two factors. Firstly your level of hearing loss and secondly on the actual telephone you use

The present situation:

Almost all mobile phones create interference with hearing aids, be they digital or analogue aids. This interference is generally heard as a buzzing sound and can make conversation impossible. The interference can come from the mobile phone you are using or mobile phones that are being used near to you.

If you do not have a hearing aid, mobile phones can be used, but there are limitations. Unlike many ordinary telephones, mobile phones have no tone control and only limited volume control. The signal that the mobile phone receives can fluctuate which means that the call can be lost unexpectedly. These are problems that are faced by everyone using a mobile phone, not just hearing impaired people.

Before purchasing a mobile phone, it is best to go into a shop and try out different models. This will allow you to find the mobile phone that is best suited to your hearing loss.

Tactics for using a mobile phone:

With hearing aids:

If you find it difficult to hear a mobile phone with your hearing aid (analogue or digital) you can use a special mobile phone neck loop. This device allows you to use your hearing aid on the 'T' or telecoil setting. By switching to 'T' your hearing aid is able to pick up signals running along the loop wire and convert them back into sound. The loop has a built in microphone to receive your voice. The mobile phone is kept away from your hearing aids eliminating the interference and allows for external sounds to be shut out. If you are used to loop systems then a neck loop is definitely worth a try.

There are also two devices available that are loop systems that are contained in a small handset, much like a mobile phone that is used in place of the mobile phone. The device is connected to the phone and is used with your hearing aids set to 'T'.

Some hard of hearing people find that they are better able to hear on the telephone if they take their hearing aid out. If this is so in your case, try this when you use a mobile phone.

Without hearing aids:

The success of using a mobile phone without a hearing aid will depend on your hearing loss. If you are unable to use an ordinary telephone without amplification it is likely that you will not be able to hear clearly on a mobile phone. However, this does not mean that a mobile phone is of no use.

You can use a mobile phone to send text messages to another mobile via the SMS (Short Message Service) system. This allows you to send and receive messages using the keypad on your mobile phone. The latest generation of mobile phones are also able to connect to the Internet. You can also use text messaging to land line phones and the text message is heard using electronic voices.

The futures bright:

In the United States of America, the legislation governing mobile phones has changed and will have an impact here very soon. The US government recently passed laws forcing mobile phone manufacturers to modify their phones so that they are hearing aid compatible. By late 2005, 25% of mobile phones in the US will be modified to reduce hearing aid interference. By late 2006 digital mobile phones that can be used with the 'T' switch will appear and by 2008 50% of mobile phones in the US will have reduced interference.

New hearing aids and mobile phones are being developed all the time, so don't give up in your search for the right combination.

But always try the phone before buying it.

Mr A Goldsmith MSHAA RHAD BA Health MSHAA RGN RMN PGCEA RNT

Registered Under The Hearing Aid Council Act 1968 N° 5640

Hearability Ltd, 29 Broadwater Street West, Worthing, Registered N° 4625005

 07990796210 / 01903 237732

Email: hearabilitys@btconnect.com