

Hearing Aids: Getting a Custom Fit

Hearing loss is generally categorized as conductive and "sensorineural". Conductive hearing loss refers to abnormal transmission of sound to the outer or middle ear. This can be easily fixed by hearing aids that use analog technology through amplification of sound. Sensorineural hearing loss is caused by cochlear or auditory nerve malfunction. Since this is more of a sound processing problem, this requires some digital technology, and this is where digital hearing aids can help.

Hearing aids that use analog technology amplifies sound by means of magnification of sound waves. The products in the market generally have them as conventional or programmable models. Conventional models feature adjustable volume control in its circuits, while programmable models allow for more flexibility. While they both have adjustable controls, the latter has more fine-tuning capabilities in terms of sound amplification.

Digital hearing aids use digital technology and process sound for optimum clarity and quality. Each model is tailored on an individual's hearing problems. It features excellent reduction or cancellation of noise, feedback and distortion. After the instrument receives sound waves, it performs millions of instant calculations to convert sound to digital format with digital technology, then as analog sound recognized by the person.

Hearing aids have taken lots of form, small or big. But they generally fall into four categories. They come as BTE (behind the ear), ITE (in the ear), ITC (in the canal), and CIC (completely in the canal). BTE's houses its microphone and amplifier in a plastic casing that fits behind the ear. They are mostly recommended for children because of their robustness.

ITE's are instruments fitted just inside the outer ear. They are used in a wider range of hearing loss, usually on patients with mild to severe problems. ITC's are fitted further into the external ear since they are smaller, and therefore almost appear concealed. They cater to patients with mild to severe hearing loss.

CIC's are the smallest type of hearing aids available in the market, and are barely visible when worn. This requires custom-fitting for individuals with ear canals large enough to accept the instrument. Despite their aesthetic appeal, they are not recommended for severe hearing loss.

Looking for the perfect match could prove to be a daunting task with so many resources on hearing aids. Product marketing and hyped-up ads even make it worse for first time buyers and they can get easily get lost in an information jungle. It is important to consider that since every patient will have different hearing loss issues, they will also need a customized instrument based on their individual needs.

With that being said, the better question might be: Which one is best for me? Your friend might say that he has the best one out there, but it may not be the best for you. Only by undergoing hearing tests and thorough evaluation of your hearing loss problems can you get the right instrument for yourself.

Remember that your needs will always be different from others, and on choosing hearing aids, it's no different. A doctor, audiologist or hearing instrument specialist can conduct accurate tests that will pinpoint the right instrument for you, be it analog or digital hearing aids.

About the Author

Purchasing [digital hearing aids](#) can be a difficult task without a guide. This is where our site on [hearing aids](#) can help. Check it out and you'll see what we mean.

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