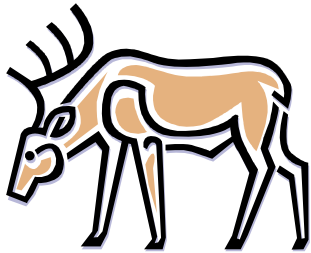
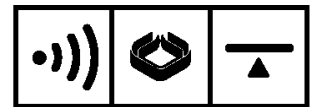


Hearing and Balance Centers *at the Elks*

IDAHO ELKS REHABILITATION HOSPITAL



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IMPORTANCE OF EXERCISE: WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

There are plenty of advertisements and news stories about exercising and health. Most often younger people are portrayed in the advertisements. What about older adults? Should they be exercising too? The answer is a resounding **YES!**

As we age, there are a number of changes that occur in our bodies. In general, most of the tissues within our body lose flexibility, elasticity, and strength. These tissues include our heart, blood vessels, lungs, muscles, tendons and bones. One statistic states that loss of thigh muscle strength, in an average 80 year old, is at or near the minimum level required to rise from a chair. Loss of that much strength can significantly impact the ability to safely complete daily life activities; such as climbing stairs, rising from a chair or toilet, and balancing. Good balance requires good strength flexibility and endurance.

Exercise is the best weapon in our arsenal to combat these losses. By exercising, flexibility, strength and endurance can be maintained and/or improved. Our heart and lungs work more efficiently, and muscles and bones get stronger as a result of an exercise program. These improvements translate to increased safety and ease of performing household tasks, engaging in community outings and decreasing the risk of falling. Exercise can also improve our mood and prevent memory loss.

How do I exercise? If new to exercising, a consultation with your medical physician is recommended to ensure you are safe to participate in an exercise program by reviewing your medical history. You may not be able to participate in the kick-boxing class at the local gym. However, other forms of exercise may be more appropriate, such as aquatics, walking, or activities in your home. A physical therapist can assist you in developing an exercise program that is appropriate and specific to your needs. Exercises can be modified for special conditions, such as arthritis or heart disease. We encourage everyone to exercise at a level that is appropriate to reap *all the benefits* exercise has to offer.

“Good balance requires good strength flexibility and endurance.”

DID YOU KNOW...

The foam plugs you buy in the store are advertised as being able to attenuate or reduce loud sound by 20-25 dB, but because it is difficult to insert them properly, they only reduce sound by 13-15 dB. That is not nearly enough to be helpful when it is needed most. However, custom ear protection is molded specifically for your ear and can provide 25-30 dB of protection. This is the most protection available and is more comfortable than ear muffs, your next best option. Custom earpieces can be used for lots of people: hunters, concertgoers, aviators, motorcyclists, musicians, dentists, cell phones or for use with iPod or MP3 players. We have this available, please ask your audiologist at your next appointment.



GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR HEARING AIDS

PART 1: REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS



Whether you are a new or longtime hearing aid user, it is probably time to assess how you are doing with your hearing aids. Ask yourself what your goals are and if you are achieving them. Hearing aids are the first step in helping you reach your listening goals. But, simply putting hearing aids in your ears will not equal success. **Success** in listening with hearing aids **is a process** that includes developing appropriate or realistic expectations and working closely with your audiologist.

Your motivation to hear well is critical to your success. It becomes the driving force. But, proper motivation may involve refining your “**wants**” and adjusting your “**beliefs**” before looking forward to the “**rewards**” of amplification.

The initial “wants” are usually obvious: to hear like you used to. Unfortunately, a sensory hearing loss cannot be restored to its normal function, even with hearing aids. Therefore, first **refine** those “wants” to specific goals; such as hearing a spouse’s or child’s voice, a bird’s call, or the television.

Your “beliefs” are based upon past experiences, whether it is your experience or someone else’s. You may have seen an individual who does not like his hearing aids, thus believing a hearing aid provides limited satisfaction and poor sound. His dissatisfaction with hearing aids is likely due to inappropriate expectations, poor fitting adjustments, or a hearing aid that is not appropriate for his hearing loss.

On the other hand, you may see an individual who appears to hear everything, thus believing that simply putting hearing aids on will solve your problems. This person’s success is likely through diligence in making the most of her hearing aids and using coping strategies to her benefit. Your “beliefs” should be appropriately adjusted through knowing the limitations of your hearing, the hearing aids and the capabilities you have to control what is happening around you.

Once your “wants” and “beliefs” are realistically adjusted, then you will realize the “rewards” of amplification. Remember, you have an advocate for your hearing: your audiologist. Success with hearing aids is a combined effort that involves you, your family, and your audiologist. If you communicate well with your audiologist, he or she can help you realize and achieve your goals and maintain successful results!

MOISTURE AND HEARING AIDS...

Are arch-enemies and do battle every time you place hearing aids in your ears. With normal wear, moisture will build up in your hearing aids and can damage the delicate circuitry and electronics within the aid. Symptoms of moisture damage include: intermittency, reduction in clarity, distortion, reduction in how well you hear in noise and an overall decrease in volume. However, there is no need to leave the aids in the drawer. A better option is a professional grade drying system; even in Idaho with little humidity.

This drying system will move warm air through the hearing aids, preventing water droplets from plugging up the internal workings of the hearing aids and maintaining appropriate function and volume from the hearing aids. A recent study on the effectiveness of this system showed that patients who used this system had a repair, on average, every 27.2 months. Those who did not use a drying system had a repair on average, every 9.7 months. So although it does not eliminate the need for repair, it will work to keep the hearing aids in your ears versus on the manufacturer’s workbench being repaired.



FROM: Richards & Martin. (2006). “Nuts and Bolts” [The Hearing Journal](#),59,(2).

New Developments at the Hearing and Balance Center

We have a **new** Hearing and Balance office in Ontario, OR. We welcome Dr. Christine Wallace, audiologist, and Colleen Stinnett, secretary, to our group.

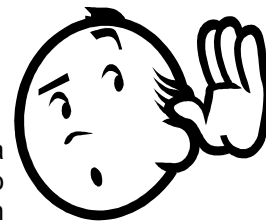
Stephen Price, a Boise PT, will present his own original research from his Master's program on balance/vestibular rehabilitation to the American Physical Therapy Association in February.

Erika Blanchard and Debbie Baerlocher will be attending the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) conference in February.

Dr. Debbie Baerlocher will be presenting at the Perinatal Conference in February and has the opportunity to talk with obstetricians, pediatricians and family physicians about the benefits of newborn hearing screening.

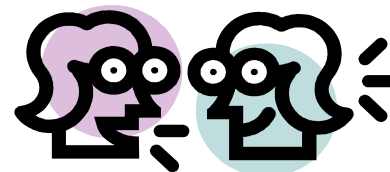
We have new secretaries in various offices. Welcome Lisa Kernan, who originally hails from NY, to Boise. Mandy McConnell is now in the Meridian office, and Andrea Koval and Heather Coon are in Nampa.

A MILD HEARING LOSS IS NOT SO MILD



A lot of people think "If I have a *little* or a mild hearing loss, people just need to speak up." Recent research has shown that even a little hearing loss can have a *large* impact on our brain and the way it works. We hear in our brain. Our ears are just the means to get the sound to our hearing center called the auditory cortex. If we do not expose our ears to sound, especially during the first three years of life, there are permanent changes that occur in our ability to hear in noise and a general decrease in the wiring connections made in our brain. This decrease in connections also happens when we develop hearing loss when we are older. However, exposing our brain to auditory information through hearing aids can slow this aging process. It is recommended that adults get a baseline hearing evaluation by age 50. Don't "wait until your hearing gets worse" or you have limited interaction with friends and family before you consider hearing aids. Getting hearing aids *earlier* versus later has a positive impact on the brain and how well we are able to participate in normal living.

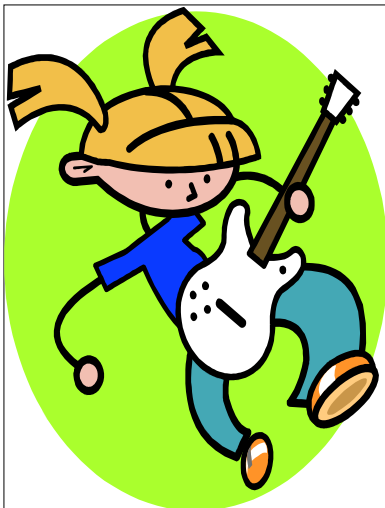
COMMUNICATION CORNER



Our world is a very noisy place – and it keeps getting louder. Americans in particular have a love of loud things – the louder the better. We think this of our tools (power drill), our toys (snowmobiles) and of our sporting events (Nascar). However, research has shown that exposure to loud sound can damage our hearing. So use ear protection regularly. If you have hearing loss, it is not protection from more hearing loss. If your ears are ringing after having been around a loud noise, it's too loud!

We, as a country, are concerned about pollution, in our water and in our air. Have ever you considered noise pollution? Think of those "crazy kids" listening to music in the car so loudly it is vibrating the road or yourself camping and a loud generator starts at the next campsite. Both are examples of noise pollution. We need to be aware that noise is not only damaging, but also affects others around us. Research has shown that noise can affect our bodies by raising our blood pressure and affecting our sleep habits. Here are some tips for protecting your ears from noise:

- Consider TV ears or a speaker beside you to improve how well you hear the TV or music without jacking up the volume
- If you wear a personal headset, don't turn the volume up above 60% of its potential volume
- Use ear protection whenever you attend a loud sporting event, concert or are working with power tools – lawn mowers and vacuums included
- Wear ear protection when shooting firearms or using fireworks
- If you use a hairdryer, purchase a "quiet" hairdryer – it works just as well and is a lot easier on the ears



In April, at the national audiology conference in Denver, Colorado, a song debuted about noise levels called "Turn it to the Left" referencing the direction we need to turn the volume control. Although catchy and amusing, the song strikes a chord about what is too loud. Noise-induced hearing loss is not just for older adults. Teens, as a rite of passage, listen to music at obnoxious volumes. Children in second grade have been found to have hearing loss as a result of being exposed to hunting, racing and concerts with their parents without the introduction of ear protection. New technology, such as the iPod and MP3 players with long-lasting rechargeable batteries, allows music to be an all day experience, not just for music when jogging. People also use headphones to block out surrounding noise. Audiologists are seeing people in their 30s and 40s with hearing loss and tinnitus (ringing in the ears). This trend of seeing "older ears on younger bodies" is not a good one and has negative impacts on communication. So, listen up and turn it down.