

Create your own personal assistive listening system

Hearing aids with telecoils that can be manually activated are the first building block used to create a versatile, user friendly and cost effective personal listening system. Telecoils allow the user to access hearing loops in places of worship and other large spaces without the need to borrow and wear a headset.

Beyond that, they can be paired with a great variety of assistive listening products to improve the speech to noise ratio and allow your hearing aids to overcome most, if not all, background noise.

A telecoil is a small copper coil built into most behind-the-ear hearing aids and many in-the-ear styles and it is used to receive and transmit silent electro-magnetic signals that your hearing aids then turn back into sound.

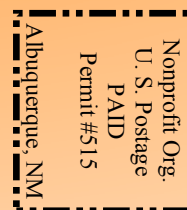


If you don't know if your hearing aids have telecoils, ask your hearing care provider if they do.

To learn more about loops and telecoils, go to: www.hearingloss.org/content/get-hearing-loop

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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For those times when your hearing aids just need a little help....

Get In the Loop

Today's digital hearing aids are remarkable devices that perform in ways hard of hearing consumers could only dream about a few short years ago

but

there are times when hearing aids alone are just not enough. You may need additional help to hear and understand in some of the more difficult settings. A neckloop used in conjunction with the telecoils in your hearing aids might be the key to better hearing in many of those situations.

Building Your Own Personal Assistive Listening System

The first device you will need to begin turning your hearing aids into your personal assistive listening system is a neckloop.

Think of a neckloop as just another kind of headset. It can be plugged into any electronic sound producing device that you can plug a headset into such as a TV set, an MP3 player, a stereo system or a radio - almost any device that has a headset or speaker jack in it.

When your telecoils (sometimes called t-coils) are turned on, the neck loop will silently transmit the sound from that device to the telecoils in your hearing aids in the form of an electromagnetic signal which the hearing aids then turn back into sound.

Neckloops come in two different forms: amplified and non-amplified



Photo courtesy Bellman Audio

A non-amplified neckloop will look something like this example. The single insulated wire on the neckloop plugs into the sound source. The looped wire is worn around the neck and it carries the sound signal that it then transmits to the telecoils in hearing aids and cochlear implants. For comparison's sake, it's like a radio tower transmitting a signal to a radio.

You must have a manual telecoil switch or a manual override to an automatic telecoil to be able to connect to a neckloop. **If you don't know if your hearing aids have telecoils, ask your provider.**

The amplified versions of neckloops come with a built-in microphone and volume control and are, again, available in two forms. The standard style can be plugged into a compatible cell phone for hands-free use (with sound in both ears.)

It will also work with land line phones that have a jack for a headset or with any of the sound producing devices noted earlier. Amplified neckloops cost more than the standard variety but are worth the added cost because of the added versatility they offer.

There are Bluetooth versions of the amplified neckloop that work with Bluetooth capable cellular phones and other devices using that technology.



Photo courtesy of Clear Sounds

The Bluetooth model shown here looks like the company's regular amplified neckloop except that it does not have a cord to connect to the sound source since the connection is via the Bluetooth signal. Like the regular model, there is a volume control to adjust the sound level from a remote sound source and a built-in microphone for hands free-talking on the phone.

The Personal Amplifier

There are products made specifically to help the hard of hearing that can be partnered with a neckloop.

First among them would be devices called personal amplifiers like the one pictured here that can be used in restaurants and other settings where background noise can make it difficult, if not impossible, to talk with others.

These devices have an attached microphone that picks up sound, amplifies it, and sends it on via a headset or, in this case, a neckloop. It can be equipped with a small microphone on a long cord so a speaker some distance away (say across the table) can be heard above the background noise.



Photo courtesy of Williams Sound



Photo courtesy of Sound Clarity

The Personal FM System

A personal FM device has a small transmitter that sends sound via radio waves to a receiver that sends it on to the telecoils of hearing aids via a neckloop.

The transmitter, hand held or placed in a shirt pocket, can have a built-in microphone or a corded one that clips onto the speaker's clothing. The receiver can also be placed in a pocket and has an attached neckloop.

These devices can be used by two people simply conversing or in a classroom or other setting where the speaker has the transmitter and the listener has the receiver. In addition to using a personal FM to communicate with others, many have found they make an excellent TV listening system - simply place the transmitter near the speaker on the TV and listen using the neck loop.



Photo courtesy of Comtek

An alternative for TV use would be a system that is specifically made for television hookups.

Such devices are plugged into the audio output jack in back of the TV and broadcast an Infrared or FM signal that sends the sound silently to a receiving neckloop.

An Internet search for "Assistive Listening Devices" will give you sources and pricing for all of these and many other products that can double the functionality of your hearing aids and really put you in the hearing loop.



Photo courtesy of Sennheiser