

Hearing versus Listening—A Communication Issue

Commonly, a person may express that they did not **hear** someone talking to them. This may indeed be the case, but sometimes they actually heard something, but did not understand it. This happens frequently to persons with hearing loss. We easily forget that hearing and listening are actually two different events. *Hearing* relates simply to the perception of sound, while *listening* involves more complex brain processing. Listening involves paying attention to the speaker, with the intention of comprehending what he or she may be saying. Therefore, the process of listening is more active than the process of hearing.

Hearing devices are a first step in managing hearing loss. These devices can help one's ability to detect sounds, allowing the listener to spend more energy on the *listening* event rather than the *hearing* event. In many cases, routine use of personal amplification may manage the hearing loss effectively; however, more assistance may be needed. The brain's ability to understand is very complex and individualized. There is now a way to enhance listening skills, leading to better comprehension and communication.



Rehabilitation is often a term used when someone is recovering from surgery or a broken limb. The same term can be applied to listening. Aural rehabilitation helps a person learn how to use their brains to listen and "fill in the gaps" better so they may reap the full potential of their auditory system.

Recognizing this need, researchers have developed a tool to help hearing impaired individuals develop, or refine, skills to assist them in becoming better listeners and, consequently, improve how much speech they understand. This tool is called LACE.

What is LACE and How May it Help You?

LACE, Listening and Communication Enhancement, is an interactive computerized training program, designed by Dr. Robert Sweetow and colleagues at USCF. This home-based program was created to improve listening and comprehension skills through various types of auditory tasks. The program adapts to your unique learning curve which helps maximize learning while minimizing frustration and boredom. Computerized training, such as LACE, has been proven effective in areas of visual and cognitive therapy.



Throughout the Training, LACE Provides Helpful Hints & Communication Strategies

The four (4) week program only takes thirty (30) minutes a day, five (5) days a week. LACE provides a variety of interactive and adaptive tasks that are divided into three main categories: degraded speech (e.g. fast speech), cognitive skills (e.g. directed listening) and communication strategies. The difficulty level of each task is based on the responses given; the more accurate the response the more difficult the next task will be, likewise inaccurate responses will result in a less difficult task.

LACE also provides the user with feedback regarding their progress and improvement from the start of the training. Furthermore, the results of the training may be tracked and electronically transmitted to a secure Website accessible by your audiologist so that he or she may monitor your progress and provide any necessary modifications to your training.

To start your LACE rehabilitation program you will need the following:

1. A home computer or laptop, or DVD player
2. A set of desktop computer speakers (laptop speakers are not sufficient for this program)
3. Optional: Internet Connection (for computer users)

There will also be limited time available for those who do not have access to a computer, or DVD player to complete their training in the clinic. LACE is for everyone, new and experienced hearing device users alike. Call now if you wish to review LACE with your audiologist.

*The Audiologists of
Physicians Hearing Services*

LACE

Physical Therapy For Your Ears
Amplify Your Listening Skills
Improves Listening up to 40%

LACE objectives

- Become more involved in your rehabilitation
- Learn to recognize the difference between hearing and listening
- Improve your confidence when listening in more difficult situations
- Improve your communication strategies
- Improve your cognitive skills related to listening

LACE was conceived by Dr. Robert Sweetow, Director of Audiology at UCSF and clinical professor in the Department of Otolaryngology. Dr. Sweetow developed LACE with Jennifer Henderson-Sabes and Monica Miller of UCSF, and Gerry Kearby, Earl Levine and Rob Modest at NeuroTone, Inc.

Hearing Device Users can be *Hands-free* too!

Telecommunications is becoming more and more prevalent in our society, such as cell phones, videophones, texting, etc. Where does the hearing device user fall into the scheme of things? Right there with everyone else! Two new technology options provide hands-free cell phone connectivity for hearing device users via a simple 'T'-switch or telecoil program. Bluetooth, a form of wireless connectivity, allows two compatible devices to communicate when in close proximity to each other. Technology has combined the neckloop (using induction technology) with Bluetooth allowing a wireless connection between a Bluetooth enabled phone and the neckloop.



In many devices the telecoil is accessed by moving a switch to the 'T' position, while in newer devices it must be programmed by your audiologist and then can be accessed by pressing your memory/ program button. Not all hearing devices are equipped with this option. If you are unsure if you have one, see your audiologist.

If you are ready to be hands-free with your peers call your audiologist to see what options are right for you.

Helpful Checklist

1. Has it been more than six (6) months since your hearing devices were checked by your audiologist?
2. Do you notice an increased difficulty understanding even with your hearing devices?
3. Are you constantly plagued by feedback, or whistling from the hearing device?
4. Are your hearing devices more than five (5) years old?

We recommend that you schedule an appointment with your audiologist if you answered "**YES**" to any of the questions above.

Helpful Tip

Did you know that moisture (such as perspiration) can be an issue for any hearing device? Ask your audiologist about a small Dri-Aid kit, or the larger Global Dri & Store to help extend the life of your hearing devices.

Farewell Michelle Bishop, MA, CCC-A!! Michelle was an integral part of our practice for almost 5 years and we will miss her. We would like to wish her the best of everything in her new home while she continues to pursue her career in Oregon.



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