

Top Christmas Tips

Christmas is wonderful, but it can also be challenging, exhausting and stressful - especially when you have a hearing loss. Crowds of people bring with them joy, often with a clamour of sound that can drown out individual voices, making it hard to focus on one conversation.

Some digital hearing aids can help, reducing background noise while recognizing and amplifying speech.

However, technology is not the only solution.

With a little help from our volunteers and supporters who live with hearing loss, we have compiled some top tips to help you this Christmas.

From all of us at Hearing Link, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Be prepared

- Carry a notebook, pen or Boogie Board – ask people to note down any parts of the conversation you haven't managed to catch.

Party time

- Choose a good spot – hearing aids don't like echoes, so avoid hard surfaces and try to find somewhere with carpets, curtains and soft furnishings
- Initiate one-to-one conversations with a number of different people – it will be much more satisfying and much less stressful than lots of voices at once
- Ask a friend to act as your hearing buddy to keep you up-to-date with the topics of conversation
- Offer to help in the kitchen – this will give you time to enjoy a little one-to-one conversation away from the bustle of the party
- Plan in advance with your host to include games like charades or story-telling, where the focus is on one person at a time.
- In restaurants, ask for a quiet table away from music sources and the kitchen.

At the table

- Ask to be seated with your back to the wall so that you are not distracted by people passing behind your back and you can see everyone clearly
- Encourage people to speak to you face on and ask them to not cover their mouth or try to speak to you with their mouth full of food
- Mention to your adjacent guests that you have a hearing loss and you are not being rude if you don't respond straight away when they speak. You'll be surprised how many people say they do too!

Take time out

- Don't be afraid to take a break from all the Christmas festivities – step outside for a walk or retreat to somewhere quiet to read a book, watch TV with subtitles, colour or read to a child
- Relax, breathe slowly and enjoy the peace and quiet – after a little break, return to the noise and clamour full of energy and enthusiasm to carry on.
- **And remember – be kind to yourself, no-one hears perfectly all the time.**



The bigger picture

- Treat Christmas like any other day – try not to get stressed out being the life and soul of the party, but enjoy it at your own pace
- Be merry – yes, it's hard work, the day may feel very long and difficult, but try to stay positive
- Try to look on the bright side and consider all you have managed to do despite your hearing loss – think of all the times you do understand what is said.

Tips for family & friends

- Get the full attention of someone with hearing loss before speaking
- Don't cover your mouth – speak clearly, not too fast or too slowly, using normal lip movements and natural facial expressions
- In any group conversation, try not to talk over each other or carry on multiple discussions
- Keep on the lookout for any signs of withdrawing from company and gently encourage them to join in
- **Most of all, be understanding – patience, respect and kindness are wonderful gifts.**

Head Office:

The Grange, Wycombe Road,
Saunderton, Princes Risborough,
Buckinghamshire HP27 9NS

Tel/SMS: 07526 123255

Email: helpdesk@hearinglink.org

www.hearinglink.org



Royal Patron HRH The Princess Royal
Reg Charity No: 293358
Scottish Charity No: SCO40486

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Hearing Link provides information and support for people with hearing loss across the UK, and their family and friends.