

GRUMPY OLD MEN

...with untreated hearing loss. As they say, you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink.

Writer: **Dirk de Moore** – audiologist, Bendigo Hearing Clinic

At the outset I should point out that I had a lot of offers from women I know to write this article for me, including my own wife. While grateful for such offers, after over 30 years experience as an audiologist and being a bloke myself, I think I know my subject matter pretty well.

Most men think their hearing problem is somebody else's problem. We are also very adept at faking it with health professionals, including hearing specialists, nodding, smiling and promising to do what we are told with no intention of changing at all. Men don't want to be at that medical appointment and usually attend under sufferance or to placate the better half. They want to get out of most confronting environments and be where they are most happy, with their mates on the golf course, having a beer at the footy or hidden in their mancave with their tools.

Men don't like change. So with hearing aid fitting, a slow gentle approach is needed to help overcome intolerance to new sounds. This means lots of patience and support from an understanding clinician

and gradual increases in amplification over time. This will assist men to wear their aids more and therefore better adjust to the feel and sound of an aid. Men's performance is also a key motivator. Work efficiency, social engagement and being able to mix it with their mates matters to them. They don't want to look dumb and don't underestimate their vanity either. Hearing aids which are discreet or invisible are the key. Men will also do almost anything to reduce the "nag factor". The nagging won't stop altogether but I'll guarantee that if a bloke wears hearing aids successfully, there will be less nagging.

Technically, we fall into two distinct groups. First, those men who can't be bothered fiddling and want it all simple and easy. For this group we have automatic technology which adapts to every listening situation. The second group I'll refer to as "technomen". The only thing most men are in control of at home is the remote for the TV and boy do we love to press those buttons. For "technomen" we have digital hearing aids with multiple programs to press for any hearing situation, remote



controls and bluetooth streaming directly into hearing aids from mobile phones and audio devices such as the TV. Imagine having the TV at a level that won't disturb anyone but still being able to hear when spoken to. Some manufacturers also now have landline phones or clip on accessories for mobiles which send the caller's voice through both hearing aids simultaneously.

Most people want value for money. In life you generally get what you pay for but that doesn't mean people need to access the most expensive technology. At the Bendigo Hearing Clinic we have technology at levels to suit all budgets and analysis by independent company, EARTRAK, shows that over 95 per cent of our clients are highly satisfied with their outcomes and our service.

For more information or to make an appointment contact the Bendigo Hearing Clinic on (03) 5442 5800 or visit www.bendigohearingclinic.com.au ■

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Penny – horticulturalist, receptionist, hearing aid user



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