

Assistive Listening Devices for Your Home



EXTRA HELP: Assistive devices are available to enable people with hearing impairment to enjoy life more fully.

KYLE KIELINSKI

Assistive listening devices (ALDs) are technologies used with or without hearing aids to overcome hearing problems that are linked to background noise and poorly controlled listening environments.¹⁻³

Some examples of ALDs for the home are:

Wake-Up Systems:

- Vibrating watches.
- Alarm clocks that provide adjustable, louder-than-normal volume and tone alarms. Many include a bed shaker and strobe light.

Alerting Systems:

- Door signalers, which alert a person to the doorbell. They are frequently designed to flash a lamp (supplied by the user) that is plugged into the receiver.
- Smoke/fire, carbon monoxide and telephone signalers, which produce a very loud sound and continuously emit a strobe light when activated.
- Pagers, which, with a strobe and sound, can be used within short distances (i.e. 100 feet) to alert a person.

Amplification Systems:

- Corded and cordless telephones, which provide about 30 dB of amplification. They use a built-in electromagnetic transmitter for compatibility with hearing aids with telephone coils (also known as telecoils or T-coils).
- TV listening and infrared systems, featuring a wireless infrared personal listening device for watching TV or listening to the stereo. Such devices also are compatible in many theaters and other public buildings that use 95 KHz infrared systems.
- FM personal communication systems, which are designed to effectively transmit information from source to listener using an FM radio signal. This device uses one to 40 channels in the 216 MHz band. Auxiliary input to the transmitter permits direct connection to a TV, stereo or other sound source.
- Cellular phone amplifiers, which are designed to make cell phone conversations louder. Many use a light, battery-free boom microphone. The boom plugs directly into a cell phone

or cordless telephone, or an induction coil is placed over the ear to more effectively couple with in-the-ear hearing aids.

TDD/VCO:

- TDD, or telecommunicating devices for the deaf; these frequently use a computer-style keyboard.
- VCO, or voice carry-over systems, which facilitate phone conversation. People with hearing impairments use their natural speech but read the responses from the person communicating to them using a TDD or teletypewriter (TTY).

Closed Captioning:

■ Closed caption decoders are designed to provide readable text that appears somewhere on the television screen.

Hearing loss does not mean lack of hearing. Most people hear; however, their hearing may need to be assisted. By combining personal listening systems, like hearing aids, with assistive listening devices, hearing ability is maximized. Therefore, it is recommended that a person with a hearing loss consult an audiologist for access to the most effective ALDs.¹⁻³

REFERENCES

1. American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, accessed via www.asha.org on the Web.
2. Self Help for Hard of Hearing People Inc., accessed via www.hearingloss.org on the Web.
3. Northeast Technical Assistance Center. The role of assistive listening devices in the classroom. Accessed via www.netac.rit.edu/publication/tipsheet/alds.html on the Web.

—By Jonathan R. Brown, PhD

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American Academy of Audiology
www.audiology.org

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
www.asha.org

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
www.agbell.org



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