BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Bluetooth Hearing Aids

Pairing, streaming and the makers' apps, in plain English
Phonak · Oticon · ReSound · Starkey · Jabra Enhance

Calls, TV and music, straight to your ears

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For iPhone and Android users · not medical advice · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your hearing aid technology manual. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. It covers the *technology* side: pairing, the makers' apps, streaming calls and TV, charging, cleaning and fixing hiccups. Your audiologist or hearing care professional handles the medical side and your prescription settings. If a screen looks a little different on your phone, the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

Start Here

What this manual covers, the five big hearing aid makers, the one rule that comes before any button-pressing, and how to tell whether your phone and your hearing aids can talk to each other.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Whoever is reading this — this is for **you**. Maybe you just came home from the hearing clinic with a small box, a charger, and a card that says "download our app." Maybe you've worn hearing aids for years and only now heard that they can play phone calls and the TV straight into your ears. Or maybe you're a son, daughter or friend trying to help someone you love hear the grandkids on FaceTime. Wherever you're starting from, you're in the right place.

I'm Bill. I bring 30+ years of professional experience to helping people get comfortable with their technology, and I serve folks right here in Portage County. I wrote this manual the way I'd explain things sitting at your kitchen table: slowly, in plain English, with the phone in one hand and the hearing aid case in the other. If I use a word you don't know, I'll stop and explain it right then.

What I am, and what I'm not

Let me be honest up front, because it matters with hearing. **I'm a technology helper, not a hearing professional.** I can help you pair your hearing aids to your phone, get the maker's app working, set up a TV streamer, and figure out why the sound dropped out in the middle of a call. What I can't do — and what no app can do — is test your hearing, diagnose anything, or decide how your hearing aids should be programmed. That belongs to your **audiologist** or hearing care professional, the person who fitted your aids.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this manual does for you

By the end, you'll be able to pair your hearing aids with an iPhone or Android phone, use your maker's app with confidence, hear phone calls and the TV clearly, keep your aids charged and clean, and fix the common hiccups yourself. Just as important, you'll know which changes are yours to make and which ones to bring to your audiologist.

The big promise: you can't break them by exploring the app

Here's something that surprises people. The adjustments a maker's app lets you make — volume, programs, a little more or less background noise — are designed to stay inside safe limits your hearing care professional set. Phonak, for example, says changes in its app stay within the range permitted by your professional fitting. So you can poke around the app without fear. If something sounds odd, switch back to your main program, or turn the aids off

and on again. Your audiologist's settings stay stored inside the hearing aids, and a restart usually brings the everyday controls back to where they started.

And you're never stuck alone. If you'd like a hand with the technology side, call me at **(330) 200-8042**. For anything about your ears or your hearing itself, call your audiologist or doctor. Between the two of us, you're covered.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What This Manual Covers

"Bluetooth hearing aids" simply means hearing aids with a tiny radio inside, so they can connect to a phone, a tablet, a TV accessory or a charger that reports the battery. Almost every hearing aid sold by the major makers today has one. That radio is what lets a phone call play inside your ears instead of through the phone's little speaker.

The five makers in this manual

Most prescription hearing aids in America come from a handful of companies. This manual covers the five you're most likely to have, plus the apps that go with them. App names change from time to time, so the names below are the ones the makers used as of November 2026.

Maker	Company and app
Phonak	Made by Sonova. App: **myPhonak**. Phonak's Bluetooth aids connect a little differently from the others (Chapter 9).
Oticon	Made by Demant. App: **Oticon Companion**, which replaced the older Oticon ON app in 2023.
ReSound	Made by GN. App: **ReSound Smart 3D** for current models such as ReSound Vivia and ReSound Nexia.
Starkey	App: **My Starkey** for newer models (Genesis AI and later). Older Livio and Evolv AI aids use the **Thrive Hearing Control** app.
Jabra Enhance	Also made by GN. The over-the-counter Select line uses the **Jabra Enhance Select** app; the clinic-fitted Pro line has its own **Jabra Enhance Pro** app.

GOOD TO KNOW

Seeing a different brand name on your aids?

Many clinics and stores sell hearing aids under their own label, made by one of these companies underneath. Costco's Kirkland Signature, Beltone, Miracle-Ear, Audibel, NuEar and others all appear on Apple's list of Made for iPhone hearing devices. The pairing steps in Part 2 still apply; the app may simply carry a different name. Your hearing clinic can tell you which app to download.

What's in each part

- **Part 1 (here):** the ground rules, and whether your phone and aids are a match.

- **Part 2:** pairing with an iPhone or Android phone, and getting the maker's app connected.
- **Part 3:** each maker's app, one by one, and what you can safely change in it.
- **Part 4:** phone calls, music, video calls, TV streamers, and Auracast in public places.
- **Part 5:** charging, disposable batteries, and cleaning.
- **Part 6:** over-the-counter hearing aids and the AirPods Pro Hearing Aid feature, described the way the FDA and Apple describe them.
- **Part 7:** buying safely, fixing problems, and when to see a professional.

TIP

There's a companion manual for the bigger picture

Bill's *Hearing Help Tech* manual covers the wider world of hearing help — the kinds of help available, captions, alerts you can see and feel, Medicare and insurance, and choosing between options. This manual goes deeper on one thing: living day to day with Bluetooth hearing aids and their apps.

CHAPTER 3

Your Audiologist Comes First

Before we touch a single setting, here's the rule that comes before everything else in this manual. It's short, and it's important.

STAY SAFE

Apps and hearing tests are not diagnoses

The hearing checks inside phone apps, AirPods and over-the-counter aids are helpful tools, but they are **not a medical diagnosis**. Only a licensed professional can examine your ears and tell you what's going on. Talk to your audiologist (or your doctor) **before** you change programs or settings beyond the everyday controls in your app, and any time your hearing changes.

Who does what

Who	What they handle
Your audiologist or hearing care professional	Tests your hearing, chooses and programs ("fits") your prescription hearing aids, sets up the programs you have, makes fine adjustments, and handles repairs. Some can adjust your aids remotely through the maker's app.
Your doctor or an ENT	An ENT is an ear, nose and throat doctor. They look after the health of your ears — infections, pain, wax blockages, sudden changes, dizziness.
You, with the maker's app	Everyday comfort: volume, switching between the programs your audiologist set up, and the simple sound controls the app offers.
Bill (and this manual)	The technology: pairing, apps, streaming, TV accessories, chargers and connection problems.

When to call a professional instead of fiddling

Some things are not technology problems at all, and no setting will fix them. Call your audiologist or doctor if you notice any of these:

- **Your hearing suddenly drops or changes** — in one ear or both. Sudden hearing loss is treated as a medical emergency by the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD). NIDCD's advice is to see a doctor immediately. **Seek care promptly.** Don't wait to see whether it passes.
- **Ear pain or discomfort**, or blood, pus or fluid coming from your ear.
- **New ringing or buzzing**, especially in only one ear.

- **Dizziness or a spinning feeling** (vertigo).
- **Hearing that gets worse, then better, then worse again.**
- Your hearing aids **no longer seem strong enough**, even when they're clean and charged.

HEADS UP

Never try to re-program your own prescription

You may see websites or videos that explain how to get into the professional fitting software makers give to clinics. Please don't. Prescription settings are matched to your hearing test and your ears, and getting them wrong can make hearing harder — or uncomfortably loud. Stick to what the maker's app lets you adjust, and ask your audiologist for anything more.

Keep your audiologist's details handy

Write down your clinic's name and phone number, the make and model of your hearing aids, and the date they were fitted. You'll use that information when you call for help, when you download the right app, and when you check whether an accessory will work. There's a spot for it on the cheat-sheet in Chapter 28.

CHAPTER 4

Will My Phone Work With My Hearing Aids?

Hearing aids don't all connect the same way. There are a few different "languages" a hearing aid can use to talk to a phone, and the phone needs to speak the same one. Here's the plain-English version. You don't need to memorize it — just recognize the names when you see them on a box or a website.

The connection types, in plain words

Name you'll see	What it means for you
Made for iPhone (MFi)	Apple's own system for hearing aids. Aids on Apple's list pair through the iPhone's **Accessibility** settings, not the regular Bluetooth list. Most Oticon, ReSound, Starkey and Jabra Enhance aids use this on an iPhone.
ASHA (Android)	Short for Audio Streaming for Hearing Aids — Google's system for streaming to hearing aids on Android phones. Many Oticon, ReSound, Starkey and Jabra Enhance aids support it.
Bluetooth "Classic"	The same kind of Bluetooth a regular headset uses. Phonak's Bluetooth aids work this way, which is why Phonak says they work with virtually any phone brand. They pair through the phone's ordinary Bluetooth settings.
Bluetooth LE Audio	The newest Bluetooth sound standard. Newer hearing aids and newer phones support it; it's what makes Auracast possible.
Auracast	A Bluetooth LE Audio feature that lets one transmitter — a TV streamer, or a speaker system in a theater or airport — broadcast sound to any number of compatible hearing aids at once (Chapter 18).

How to check your own pair

1. **Find your hearing aid model.** It's in your paperwork from the clinic, on the box, or in the maker's app once it's connected. Your audiologist can tell you over the phone.
2. **iPhone users:** Apple keeps a "List of Made for iPhone hearing devices" on its support website, organized by brand. If your model is on it, you'll pair through Accessibility (Chapter 5). Phonak isn't on that list because Phonak uses regular Bluetooth instead.
3. **Android users:** check your hearing aid maker's compatibility page (each maker has one) for your exact phone model. Android support depends on the phone as well as the Android version.
4. **Check the phone's software is up to date.** On an iPhone: Settings > General > Software Update. On Android, open Settings and look for **Software update** (where it sits varies by phone). Apple and Samsung both suggest updating when a hearing aid won't connect or a setting is missing.

GOOD TO KNOW

Hands-free calls need a newer iPhone

Apple's list marks some hearing aids with an asterisk, meaning they support **bidirectional** streaming: you hear the caller in your aids *and* the aids' microphones pick up your voice, so you can talk without holding the phone. Apple says this needs an iPhone 11 or later. Older iPhones still stream the caller's voice to your aids; you just speak into the phone.

TIP

Your clinic can check before you buy a phone

Shopping for a new phone and worried your hearing aids won't like it? Call your audiologist or the maker first and give them the phone's exact model. It's a two-minute question that can save a big headache. Our *iPhone* and *Android Phones* manuals have more on choosing and setting up the phone itself.

PART 2

Pairing Your Hearing Aids

Introducing your hearing aids to your phone — once — so they find each other on their own every morning after. iPhone, Android, the maker's app, and the hearing controls already built into your phone.

CHAPTER 5

Pairing With an iPhone or iPad

Pairing is the one-time introduction between your hearing aids and your phone. After that, Apple says, your hearing aids reconnect to the iPhone automatically whenever they turn on. Many audiologists pair the aids for you at the fitting appointment, so check first — you may already be done.

HEADS UP

Phonak owners: use the regular Bluetooth steps

Phonak's Bluetooth hearing aids aren't on Apple's Made for iPhone list, because they connect like a headset instead. If you have Phonak, skip ahead to Chapter 9. The steps below are for Oticon, ReSound, Starkey, Jabra Enhance and the other brands on Apple's list.

Step one: put the hearing aids in pairing mode

"Pairing mode" means the aids are listening for a new phone to introduce itself. Apple describes three common ways to get there; your hearing aid's user guide will say which one fits yours:

- **Replaceable batteries:** open the battery door on each aid, then close it when you're ready to pair.
- **An on/off switch:** turn each aid off and back on when you're ready to pair.
- **Rechargeable with no switch:** take the aids out of the charger when you're ready to pair.

Pairing mode only lasts a few minutes, so have your phone unlocked and in your hand before you do this step.

Step two: pair from Accessibility settings

1. Make sure your iPhone's software is up to date (Settings > General > Software Update).
2. Keep the hearing aids close to the phone — on the table beside it is perfect.
3. Open the **Settings** app and tap **Accessibility**.
4. Tap **Hearing Devices**.
5. Tap **Pair MFi Hearing Device** and follow the instructions on the screen. Choose your hearing aids when they appear, then tap **Pair**.

6. If you don't see Pair MFi Hearing Device, tap the name of your hearing aids when it appears on the Hearing Devices screen. Tap **Pair** on each Bluetooth pairing request that pops up — there's often one for each ear, so expect two.

TIP

Don't pair from the regular Bluetooth list

For Made for iPhone hearing aids, the right place is **Settings > Accessibility > Hearing Devices**, not the Bluetooth screen. Jabra Enhance's own help pages say the same: don't search for the aids in the Bluetooth menu. Pairing from the wrong place is one of the most common reasons aids connect badly or show up twice.

One set of hearing aids at a time

Apple notes that if you pair a *different* hearing device later, it replaces the previous one. That's normal. If you have an iPad as well, you can pair the same aids to it, and the aids may hop between your Apple devices when a call comes in or you start playing audio. Apple calls this **Handoff**, and you can change it in the Hearing Devices settings if the hopping bothers you.

Unpairing ("forgetting") your hearing aids

You'd only do this when passing a phone on, getting new aids, or when a support person asks you to start fresh. Open **Settings > Accessibility > Hearing Devices**, tap the name of your hearing aids, then tap **Forget this device**. They won't reconnect until you pair them again.

GOOD TO KNOW

A Mac can use them too

Apple says Made for iPhone hearing aids can also pair with many recent Macs (System Settings > Accessibility > Hearing Devices). Handy for video calls on a bigger screen. Apple's list of hearing devices shows which Macs qualify.

CHAPTER 6

Pairing With an Android Phone

Android phones come from many companies — Google Pixel, Samsung Galaxy, Motorola and others — so the menus vary a little. Google's own help pages give two routes, and Samsung adds its own. Some of these steps need Android 14 or later, Google notes.

Route one: Connected devices (try this first)

Google says to try this route first, because it works with all types of hearing devices — including Phonak's.

1. Put your hearing aids in pairing mode (open and close the battery doors, switch them off and on, or take them out of the charger — whatever your aids' guide says).
2. Open the **Settings** app.
3. Tap **Connected devices**, then **Pair new device**.
4. Choose your hearing aid from the list. **If you have two**, wait for the first one to finish connecting, then tap the second one.
5. When both are paired, the screen shows that they're connected. Tap the **Settings** (gear) icon next to the name to see their options.

Route two: Accessibility (best for ASHA hearing aids)

1. Put your hearing aids in pairing mode.
2. Open **Settings**, tap **Accessibility**, then **Hearing devices**.
3. Tap **Pair new device**, choose your first hearing aid, wait for it to connect, then choose the second.

Can't find your hearing aids in the list? Google suggests tapping **See more devices** on the "Connected devices" or "All Bluetooth devices" page.

On a Samsung Galaxy phone

Samsung puts hearing aids under its hearing features. Samsung's support pages describe it like this:

1. Put your hearing aids in pairing mode.
2. Open **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Hearing enhancements** > **Hearing aid support**.
3. Tap **Pair new hearing aids**, then **Continue**.
4. Choose your hearing aids from the list and tap **Pair**.

Samsung adds that you can also pair through Settings > Connections > Bluetooth, and that if the hearing aid option is missing on a phone that should support it, updating the phone's software usually brings it back.

GOOD TO KNOW

"Hearing aid compatibility" is a different switch

In the same Samsung menu you'll see a switch called **Hearing aid compatibility**. That's not Bluetooth pairing. It's for the older **telecoil** ("T") setting, where a hearing aid picks up the phone's sound magnetically when you hold it to your ear. Google's help describes the same idea as HAC mode. Leave it alone unless your audiologist set up a T program for you.

HEADS UP

Streaming needs support on both sides

Samsung is clear that for streaming, **both** the phone and the hearing aids must support it. Some phones can pair for app control but can't stream calls or music to certain aids. If calls aren't coming through, check your hearing aid maker's compatibility list for your exact phone before you assume something is broken.

CHAPTER 7

Getting the Maker's App Connected

Pairing gets the sound flowing. The **maker's app** is the remote control: it shows battery levels, lets you change volume and programs, and (with many makers) lets your audiologist adjust your aids from a distance. The apps are free to download.

Which app do I need?

Your aids	The app to download
Phonak	**myPhonak**
Oticon	**Oticon Companion** (the Oticon ON app was retired in 2023)
ReSound	**ReSound Smart 3D**
Starkey	**My Starkey** for Genesis AI, Edge AI, Omega AI and newer; **Thrive Hearing Control** for Livio and Evolv AI
Jabra Enhance Select (OTC)	**Jabra Enhance Select**
Jabra Enhance Pro (clinic)	**Jabra Enhance Pro**
Store or clinic brands	Ask your clinic; it's often the same app under a different name

Installing and connecting, step by step

1. Open the **App Store** (iPhone) or **Play Store** (Android).
2. Search for the exact app name in the table above. Check that the developer shown under the app name is the hearing aid company itself — for example Oticon, Starkey, Sonova (Phonak's parent company) or GN (ReSound and Jabra Enhance).
3. Tap **Get** or **Install**. It's free.
4. Open the app and follow its welcome screens. It will ask for permission to use **Bluetooth** and, often, your **location** and **notifications**. Bluetooth is required. Location is used for features like finding a lost hearing aid. Allow what you're comfortable with.
5. When the app asks, put your hearing aids in pairing mode and let it find them.
6. Some apps ask you to create an account. That's mainly for remote care with your audiologist; you can usually skip it if you only want the remote-control features.

GOOD TO KNOW

Phonak and the app do the pairing for you (newer models)

Phonak says that with its **Infinio Ultra** aids and newer, pairing in the myPhonak app also sets up phone calls and streaming in one go. With older Phonak models, you pair in the phone's Bluetooth settings first (Chapter 9), then connect the app.

SCAM ALERT

Only download the real app

App stores sometimes carry look-alike "hearing aid" apps, some with subscriptions. The makers' apps are free and come from the company that made your aids. If an app asks you to pay to "unlock" your hearing aids, stop — that's not your maker's app. When in doubt, ask your clinic which app to install.

Keep the app — and the hearing aids — updated

Apps get updates through the App Store or Play Store like any other app. Hearing aids themselves also get **firmware** updates (firmware is the software inside the aids). Apple's help pages suggest the maker's app is usually where you find and install them. Your audiologist can also update the aids at a visit. Updates often fix connection problems, so don't ignore them — but do them at home, with the aids charged and close to the phone.

CHAPTER 8

Your Phone's Built-In Hearing Controls

You don't always need the maker's app. Both iPhone and Android have hearing aid controls built in, and some of them are quicker to reach.

On an iPhone

Apple says that when Made for iPhone hearing aids are connected, the iPhone itself can control the microphone level (that's the volume of the world around you), audio presets (your programs) and more. Find these in **Settings > Accessibility > Hearing Devices**, then tap the name of your hearing aids.

- **The Hearing control in Control Center.** Apple lets you add a Hearing control to Control Center (the panel you open by swiping down from the top-right corner of the screen, or up from the bottom on iPhones with a Home button). It's the fastest way to check battery and change volume or program.
- **The Accessibility Shortcut.** Apple's triple-click shortcut can bring up your hearing aid controls — battery, volume and presets — from anywhere. The step-by-step is in "Ways Your Bluetooth Hearing Aids Can Make Life Easier."
- **Live Listen.** Turns the iPhone into a little microphone you can set in front of someone you want to hear (Chapter 16).

On an Android phone

Google says that from **Quick Settings** (swipe down from the top of the screen) you can check whether your hearing aids are connected, connect or disconnect them, see battery levels, and open their settings. Google also describes these options for hearing devices that support them:

Option	What it does
Presets	Switch between the presets (programs) your audiologist set up: tap Settings next to the hearing aid's name, then **Preset**.
Where sounds play	In Settings > Accessibility > Hearing devices, under "Sound," choose whether notifications, ringtones, alarms and media play through your hearing aids or the phone's speaker.
Phone's microphone for calls	Use the phone's microphone instead of the hearing aids' for clearer calls in noisy places — only on hearing aids that support it.
Ambient volume	Adjust how loud the world around you is, one ear at a time — again, only on aids that support it.

Option	What it does
Hearing device shortcut	Settings > Accessibility > Hearing devices > **Hearing device shortcut** puts the controls a tap away.

GOOD TO KNOW

Presets here are your audiologist's presets

Google's help says it plainly: these are the presets "set up by your audiologist." Switching between them is everyday use, like changing radio stations. Creating new ones, or changing what's inside them, is a job for your hearing care professional.

FROM BILL

Two ways to do the same thing is a good thing

Some days the maker's app will be the easiest; other days the phone's own controls will be. Neither is wrong. I usually suggest folks learn one way well — whichever feels friendlier — and know the other exists for the day the first one misbehaves. If you'd like me to set up whichever you prefer, call (330) 200-8042.

PART 3

The Makers' Apps, One by One

Phonak, Oticon, ReSound, Starkey and Jabra Enhance each have their own app with its own words for things. Here's what each one does, where the everyday controls live, and which changes are yours to make.

CHAPTER 9

Phonak and the myPhonak App

Phonak does Bluetooth a little differently from the other big makers, and knowing that saves a lot of confusion. Phonak's Bluetooth hearing aids use **Bluetooth Classic** — the same kind a regular headset uses — for calls and streaming. Phonak says this lets them work with virtually any phone brand, iPhone or Android. The flip side: on an iPhone they pair through the regular Bluetooth settings, not the Accessibility screen.

Pairing Phonak aids with an iPhone (older models)

If you have Phonak **Infinio Ultra** or newer and you've already paired them in the myPhonak app, Phonak says you can skip this — calls and streaming were set up for you. For other Phonak Bluetooth models, Phonak's support pages describe these steps:

1. On the iPhone, open **Settings > Bluetooth** and make sure Bluetooth is on.
2. Put the hearing aids in pairing mode by turning them off and on (or taking them out of the charger). Phonak says they stay in pairing mode for **3 minutes**.
3. After a few seconds, the aids' name appears in the Bluetooth device list — usually **R-Phonak hearing aid** or **L-Phonak hearing aid**, or a name your audiologist chose.
4. Tap the name to connect, and accept any pairing request that pops up.
5. Now open the **myPhonak** app and follow its steps to connect the app as well. Phonak notes the app may add two more entries to the Bluetooth list starting with "LE_" — that's normal.

TIP

Seeing your hearing aid listed twice?

After a software update — Phonak mentions this when Infinio aids are updated to Ultra — you may see two entries for the same ear. Phonak's suggested fix is to remove all the Phonak entries from the Bluetooth list (tap the circled "i" beside each one, then Forget This Device), then pair again from the start.

What the myPhonak app does

Feature	What it does for you
Remote control	Change the volume, switch programs, and use the special sound features your aids offer. Phonak says these adjustments are limited to the range your professional fitting allows.

Feature	What it does for you
Remote Support	A live video appointment with your hearing care professional, who can adjust your aids while you're at home. It's arranged in advance with your clinic, and availability depends on your country and clinic.
Find my hearing aids	Shows where your aids were last connected to the phone. Phonak lists it for Infinio aids with a recent app version and location turned on (Android 11 or later on Android phones).
Battery and status	Shows each aid's battery level and connection.

GOOD TO KNOW

Phonak's pairing advice: not in public

Sonova, Phonak's parent company, advises against pairing hearing aids in busy public places because of the small chance of unwanted interference from someone else's device. Pair at home, and you'll be fine.

GOOD TO KNOW

The TV and Phonak

Phonak's TV accessory is the **Phonak TV Connector**. Setting it up is in Chapter 17.

CHAPTER 10

Oticon and the Oticon Companion App

Oticon's app is called **Oticon Companion**. If you had Oticon aids a few years ago, you may remember the **Oticon ON** app — Oticon retired it in 2023 and moved everyone to Companion, which also took over Oticon's separate remote-care app. If an old phone still has Oticon ON on it, delete it and install Companion instead.

Connecting Oticon aids

Oticon aids are on Apple's Made for iPhone list, so on an iPhone you pair them through **Settings > Accessibility > Hearing Devices** (Chapter 5). On Android, use the steps in Chapter 6. Then open Oticon Companion and let it find your aids.

What Oticon Companion does

Feature	What it does for you
Volume and programs	Turn the volume up or down and switch between the programs your audiologist set up.
Battery level	See how much charge each aid has left.
Find your hearing aid	Helps you locate a misplaced aid.
Streaming Equalizer	Adjust the tone of *streamed* sound — calls, music, TV — without touching your everyday hearing settings.
RemoteCare	A virtual appointment by live video, during which your hearing care professional can adjust your aids remotely.
Auracast broadcasts	On Oticon aids that support Bluetooth LE Audio, the app can find and join Auracast broadcasts (Chapter 18).

Oticon notes that some features depend on your hearing aid model and its firmware, so don't worry if your app doesn't show everything listed here. Newer Oticon families — Oticon's 2026 launches include **Oticon Zeal** and **Oticon Reveal** — tend to have the most features.

GOOD TO KNOW

The TV and Oticon

Oticon's TV accessory is the **Oticon TV Adapter 3.0**. Setting it up is in Chapter 17.

TIP

Use the Streaming Equalizer, not the volume, for tinny TV

If streamed sound seems too sharp or too bassy, the Streaming Equalizer is the right tool. It changes only the streamed sound. Your everyday hearing — voices across the table, birds outside — stays exactly as your audiologist set it.

CHAPTER 11

ReSound and the ReSound Smart 3D App

ReSound's app for its current hearing aids is **ReSound Smart 3D**. It works with recent families such as **ReSound Vivia** (introduced in 2025) and **ReSound Nexia**, along with many older models. ReSound keeps an up-to-date list of which phones work with which aids at resound.com/compatibility.

Connecting ReSound aids

Many ReSound models, including Nexia, appear on Apple's Made for iPhone list, so on an iPhone you pair through Accessibility (Chapter 5). On Android, use Chapter 6. ReSound says its newest aids — Vivia, Enzo IA, Savi and Nexia — also support Bluetooth LE Audio on compatible phones with Bluetooth 5.3 or later. If you're unsure which way your aids should pair with your particular phone, ReSound's compatibility page or your clinic will tell you.

What ReSound Smart 3D does

Feature	What it does for you
Programs and volume	Change programs and volume, and save simple or more detailed sound adjustments as favorites.
Sound Enhancer	Quick controls for speech focus, noise and wind noise — if your model and your fitting include them.
ReSound Assist	Send a request for help to your hearing care professional from the app, and receive new settings that you save straight to your hearing aids.
Find My Hearing Aids	Helps locate lost aids, using your phone's location.

GOOD TO KNOW

"Favorites" are yours; the fitting isn't

Saving a favorite — say, a little less background noise for the coffee shop — is exactly the kind of everyday change the app is built for. ReSound Assist is the right path for anything deeper: you describe the problem, your professional decides on the change and sends it to you.

GOOD TO KNOW

The TV and ReSound

ReSound's TV accessory is the **ReSound TV-Streamer+**, which ReSound describes as ready for Auracast. Chapter 17 covers TV streaming.

CHAPTER 12

Starkey: My Starkey and Thrive

Starkey has two apps in use, and which one you need depends on the age of your hearing aids:

App	For which aids
My Starkey	Starkey's current app, built for Genesis AI and used by newer families such as Edge AI and Omega AI.
Thrive Hearing Control	Starkey's earlier app. Starkey says it remains the app for Livio and Evolv AI hearing aids.

If you're not sure which family you have, the model name is in your paperwork — or call your clinic. Installing the wrong app does no harm; it simply won't find your aids.

Connecting Starkey aids

Starkey's Bluetooth aids are on Apple's Made for iPhone list, so iPhone users pair through Accessibility (Chapter 5); Android users follow Chapter 6. Starkey's site, starkey.com/my-starkey, has compatibility details and how-to videos.

What My Starkey does

Feature	What it does for you
Volume, programs and Edge Mode+	Everyday controls, plus Edge Mode+, which Starkey describes as using AI to tune the sound on demand for clearer speech or more comfort.
TeleHear	Request remote adjustments from your hearing care professional, including by video chat, so you may need fewer office visits.
Fall Alert	On models that have it, the aids' built-in sensors can detect a fall and send an alert message to contacts you choose. It must be set up in the app first.
Starting the TV stream	If you have a Starkey TV Streamer, you can start TV sound from the app (Chapter 17).

STAY SAFE

Fall Alert is a helper, not an emergency service

A hearing aid fall alert can be a real comfort, but it only works if the aids are in your ears, charged, connected to your phone, and the phone has signal. It isn't a monitored emergency service and doesn't replace calling 911. If falls are a worry in your home, our *Medical Alert & Fall Detection* manual walks through monitored options.

CHAPTER 13

Jabra Enhance: The Select App and Remote Care

Jabra Enhance hearing aids are made by GN, the same company behind ReSound. There are two quite different lines, and it helps to know which one you have:

Line	How it's sold, and the app
Jabra Enhance Select	Over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids sold online and in some stores, with remote support from Jabra Enhance's own hearing specialists. App: **Jabra Enhance Select**.
Jabra Enhance Pro	Prescription aids fitted by a local hearing care professional. App: **Jabra Enhance Pro**.

Connecting Jabra Enhance Select aids

Jabra Enhance's help center gives these steps for an iPhone on iOS 27 or later:

1. Open **Settings > Accessibility > Hearing Devices**.
2. Tap **Pair MFi Hearing Device** and choose your aids when they appear.
3. Open the **Jabra Enhance Select** app and follow its instructions.

Jabra Enhance adds an important warning: **don't** search for the aids in your phone's regular Bluetooth menu. On Android phones that support ASHA streaming, the app connects to the aids directly — follow the app's on-screen steps.

Remote care with a Jabra Enhance specialist

With the Select line, your "audiologist" is a Jabra Enhance hearing specialist you reach remotely. Jabra Enhance says you can request a remote adjustment through the app or book an appointment with one of its specialists. Its website described the Select 700 package as including three years of audiology services, warranty and loss-and-damage coverage, and a 100-day trial when bought directly from Jabra Enhance (November 2026).

HEADS UP

Where you buy changes the return window

Jabra Enhance notes that its 100-day trial applies when you buy directly from it; buying from a big online store may give you only that store's standard return window (Amazon's is 30 days). Before you buy any hearing aid, read the return policy carefully — hearing aids take weeks to get used to.

TIP

Re-pairing is the go-to fix for Jabra Enhance

If the app stops finding your aids, Jabra Enhance's own advice is to unpair and re-pair them. On Android, it also suggests clearing the app's data first. Chapter 25 walks through a fresh start for any brand.

CHAPTER 14

What You Can Safely Change — and What Belongs to Your Audiologist

Every app in this part has buttons and sliders, and it's natural to wonder how far you can go. Here's the honest line, and it's the same for every brand.

Yours to change, any time

- **Volume** — up for a soft-spoken friend, down for a noisy restaurant.
- **Switching programs** your audiologist created — "Restaurant," "Music," "TV," and so on.
- **Quick sound controls** the app offers on the main screen, like less background noise, more speech focus, or less wind.
- **Tone of streamed sound** (calls, music, TV), where the app has a streaming equalizer.
- **Saving favorites** and turning features such as Find My Hearing Aids or Fall Alert on or off.

Talk to your audiologist first

- **You keep wanting more volume than the app allows**, or you're turning it up every day. That can mean your hearing has changed or the aids need re-fitting.
- **Adding, deleting or rebuilding programs.**
- **Anything sounds painful, harsh or uncomfortably loud** — even briefly.
- **One ear sounds very different from the other** when both aids are clean and charged.
- **Changing which hearing aid model or app you use**, or moving to OTC aids.

STAY SAFE

Discomfort is a reason to call, not to keep adjusting

If anything about your hearing aids hurts — the sound or the fit — take them out and call your audiologist. If you notice a sudden change in your hearing, ringing, dizziness, ear pain or drainage, call your doctor. A sudden drop in hearing should be seen promptly.

How remote adjustments work

Most of the makers now offer some form of remote care: myPhonak's **Remote Support**, Oticon's **RemoteCare**, **ReSound Assist**, Starkey's **TeleHear**, and Jabra Enhance's remote adjustments. The idea is the same: *you* describe what's wrong, and *your professional* decides on the change and sends it to your aids. You're not doing the fitting — you're just

saving a trip.

1. Ask your clinic whether it offers remote care with your aids, and how to book it.
2. Make sure the maker's app is installed and up to date, and that you've created the account the app asks for (remote care usually needs one).
3. Before the appointment, charge the aids and your phone, and sit somewhere quiet with good Wi-Fi.
4. Keep the hearing aids in your ears and the phone near you while the changes are sent.
5. Afterwards, try the new settings for a few days in real life before deciding how they feel.

FROM BILL

Happy to get the app ready before your remote visit

If your audiologist offers remote adjustments but the app account, Wi-Fi or video call has you stuck, I can get the technology side ready ahead of time so your appointment goes smoothly. I won't touch your hearing settings — that's your audiologist's job — but I'll make sure the connection is solid. Call (330) 200-8042.

PART 4

Calls, Music and TV

The best part of Bluetooth hearing aids: phone calls, FaceTime, audiobooks and the TV playing right inside your ears, at a volume that suits you — and, with Auracast, sound shared in public places.

CHAPTER 15

Phone Calls Into Your Hearing Aids

Once your aids are paired, a phone call can play in both ears at once, instead of one ear pressed against a little speaker. For many people this is the single biggest reason to pair their aids.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What streamed calls do for you

The caller's voice arrives in *both* ears, tuned to your hearing aids, with the room's noise pushed into the background. No more holding the phone at just the right angle or asking people to repeat themselves. Many folks find they enjoy calling the family again.

Answering a call

When a call comes in, you'll typically hear a ringtone in your aids. You can answer on the phone's screen as usual, and the sound goes to your hearing aids automatically. Many hearing aids also let you answer or decline by pressing a button or tapping the aid — the exact gesture depends on your model, so check your aid's user guide or ask your audiologist which one is set up for you.

Talking hands-free

Your setup	How hands-free works
iPhone + aids that support it	Apple's list marks hearing aids with bidirectional streaming. With an iPhone 11 or later, the aids' own microphones pick up your voice, so you can set the phone down and talk.
iPhone + other MFi aids	You hear the caller in your aids, but you speak into the iPhone, so keep it near your mouth.
Android	Depends on the phone and aids. Google notes you can choose to use the **phone's** microphone for calls on aids that support that option — handy in a noisy place.
Phonak	Phonak's Bluetooth aids act like a headset with any paired phone, so hands-free calling is built in.

TIP

In a noisy room, use the phone's microphone

If callers say they can hear clattering dishes more than you, your hearing aid microphones may be picking up the room. On an Android phone with aids that support it, switch on "use phone's microphone for calls" in the hearing device settings (Chapter 8). On an iPhone, holding the phone closer helps.

Choosing where the ringtone plays

On Android, Google lets you decide whether ringtones, alarms, notifications and media play through your hearing aids or through the phone's speaker (Settings > Accessibility > Hearing devices, under "Sound"). Google adds a reassuring detail: if you send alarms and ringtones to your hearing aids, they still play on the phone's speaker too, so you won't miss them when the aids are out.

HEADS UP

Hearing aids out? The phone may still be routed to them

If you take your aids off for a nap while they're still on and connected, a call can ring in the aids on the nightstand instead of on the phone. Put the aids in their charger or case (which usually switches them off), and sound goes back to the phone.

CHAPTER 16

Music, Audiobooks, Video Calls and Live Listen

Anything that plays sound on your phone can play in your hearing aids: music, podcasts, audiobooks, YouTube videos, FaceTime and video calls with the grandkids, even turn-by-turn directions. Once the aids are paired and connected, it usually just happens.

If the sound comes out of the phone instead

Apple's advice when the aids are connected but you hear nothing in them: choose the hearing aids as the **sound output**, the same way you'd pick a speaker. On an iPhone:

1. Open Control Center (swipe down from the top-right corner; on iPhones with a Home button, swipe up from the bottom).
2. Touch the small **AirPlay** icon in the music controls (a circle of rings with a triangle).
3. Choose your hearing aids from the list.

Apple also suggests checking the microphone level in the Hearing Devices settings. On Android, open Quick Settings and check that the hearing aids show as connected for media.

Making streamed sound clearer

- **Use the volume buttons** on the phone while something is playing — that changes the streamed volume.
- **Use your app's streaming equalizer**, if it has one (Oticon Companion's Streaming Equalizer is an example), to make voices crisper without changing your everyday settings.
- **Turn on captions** for videos and calls as well. Hearing plus reading is easier than hearing alone. Our *Hearing Help Tech* manual covers captions and Live Caption.

Live Listen: your iPhone as a little microphone

Apple's **Live Listen** turns an iPhone or iPad into a remote microphone that sends sound to Made for iPhone hearing aids. Apple says it can help you hear a conversation in a noisy room, or someone speaking across the room. Set the phone on the table in front of the person you want to hear, and their voice comes through your aids. The full steps are in "Ways Your Bluetooth Hearing Aids Can Make Life Easier" near the start of this guide.

GOOD TO KNOW

Live Listen is for Made for iPhone aids

Apple describes Live Listen for Made for iPhone hearing devices (and for AirPods). Phonak aids and Android phones don't use Apple's Live Listen, but several makers sell their own clip-on or table microphones that do a similar job. Ask your audiologist what's available for your aids.

HEADS UP

Be thoughtful about where you use it

Live Listen picks up whatever is near the phone. Use it for conversations you're part of — not to listen in on others — and remember to turn it off afterward so you're not still hearing the room you left.

CHAPTER 17

TV Streamers and Connectors

A TV streamer is a small box that plugs into your television's audio output and sends the TV's sound straight to your hearing aids. Everyone else can listen to the TV speakers at their usual volume, while you hear the dialogue clearly in your own ears. Each maker sells its own, and they're generally made for that maker's aids.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What a TV streamer does for you

No more turning the TV up so loud the neighbors know what you're watching, and no more arguments over the remote. You set your own volume in your aids, and the rest of the family sets theirs on the TV. Dialogue that used to blur together often becomes clear.

Which streamer goes with which aids

Your aids	The maker's TV accessory
Phonak	**Phonak TV Connector**. Plugs into the TV's **optical** audio output. Phonak says any number of Phonak aids can connect to one TV Connector.
Oticon	**Oticon TV Adapter 3.0**. Works with Oticon aids that use Oticon's 2.4 GHz wireless.
ReSound	**ReSound TV-Streamer+**, which ReSound describes as ready for Auracast broadcasting.
Starkey	**Starkey TV Streamer** (Starkey has had more than one model; check which works with your aids).
Jabra Enhance	Ask Jabra Enhance support which TV accessory works with your model.

HEADS UP

Check the model before you buy

TV streamers change as hearing aids change, and an older streamer may not work with newer aids (or the other way around). Before you buy, give your audiologist or the maker your exact hearing aid model. Buying through your clinic means they can confirm it — and often pair it for you.

Connecting the streamer to the TV

Most streamers connect to the TV with an **optical audio cable** (also called TOSLINK — a thin cable with a small square plug that glows red at the tip). Look for a port on the back of the TV marked **Optical** or **Digital Audio Out**. Some streamers can also use the TV's headphone or analog audio jack. The streamer also needs its own power from a wall outlet.

1. Plug the streamer's power adapter into the wall and into the streamer.
2. Connect the optical cable from the TV's **Optical / Digital Audio Out** port to the streamer.
3. Turn the TV on. On some TVs you'll need to switch the TV's sound output setting so audio goes to the optical port as well as (or instead of) the speakers — our *Smart TVs* manual shows where your TV keeps its sound settings.
4. Pair the streamer with your hearing aids using the maker's steps below.

Pairing the streamer to your aids

Streamer	Maker's pairing steps
Phonak TV Connector	The first time it's powered up, Phonak says it starts connecting automatically and the aids play a confirmation tone. To pair (or pair another person's aids), keep the aids switched on within about 3 feet (1 meter) and press the **Connect** button on the back. A beep in the aids within about 10 seconds means it worked.
Oticon TV Adapter 3.0	Oticon's instructions say that when the hearing aids are in pairing mode and within about 1 foot (30 cm) of the adapter, it pairs and connects to them automatically.
Starkey TV Streamer	Starkey's guide: press the streamer's pairing button, and keep the hearing aids within about 6 inches of it. Accessories pair with the *hearing aids*, not with your phone or the app. After that, you can start the TV sound from the My Starkey app or a button on your aids.
ReSound TV-Streamer+	Follow the setup steps in the box or in the ReSound Smart 3D app; your clinic can pair it for you.

TIP

Starting and stopping TV sound

Once paired, most streamers start sending sound when the TV is on, and your aids switch to it with a press of the aid's button, a choice in the maker's app, or automatically, depending on how your audiologist set things up. To go back to normal hearing, use the same button or app. The streamer's user guide shows which applies to yours.

GOOD TO KNOW

Soundbars and hearing aids get along

A soundbar doesn't replace a TV streamer, but clearer TV sound from the room helps too — especially for the rest of the family. Our *Soundbars & Home Audio* manual covers dialogue modes and night modes. Many soundbars connect with HDMI, while TV streamers usually take the optical port, so check that your TV has the outputs you need for both.

CHAPTER 18

Auracast: Tuning In to Shared Sound

Auracast is a newer Bluetooth feature that works a bit like a radio station. One transmitter broadcasts sound, and any number of compatible hearing aids or earbuds nearby can tune in. It uses Bluetooth LE Audio, so it needs newer hearing aids that support LE Audio, and a phone or app to help you choose a broadcast.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What Auracast can do for you

Google describes it as a direct connection from hearing aids to audio broadcasts in crowded and public places — think a lecture hall, a train station, a place of worship, or a TV at the gym. Instead of straining to hear a speaker system, you hear it in your own aids. At home, an Auracast-capable TV streamer can let several people listen at once.

Do my aids and phone support it?

- **Your hearing aids** must support Bluetooth LE Audio and Auracast. Examples from the makers include Oticon's LE Audio models (Oticon says Oticon Real, Oticon Verit and earlier models aren't supported), ReSound's Vivia, Enzo IA, Savi and Nexia, and Jabra Enhance's newer Select models. Ask your audiologist about yours.
- **Android:** Google announced Auracast support for LE Audio hearing aids in March 2025, starting with Samsung Galaxy phones on One UI 7 and Pixel phones on Android 16. Not every model is included, so check your phone.
- **The maker's app** can act as a "broadcast assistant." Oticon, for example, says Oticon Companion can find and join Auracast broadcasts on Android 10 or later and on iPhones with iOS 15.2 or later — when your aids support LE Audio.

Joining a broadcast with your maker's app (Oticon example)

1. Look for an Auracast sign at the venue. It may show the broadcast's name, a **QR code**, and sometimes a password.
2. Open your maker's app (for example, Oticon Companion) and look for the Auracast or broadcast section.
3. Either scan the QR code, or pick the broadcast from the list of **Nearby broadcasts** and tap **Join**.
4. If the broadcast is password-protected, type the password the venue gives you.

5. Use the app's slider to set the volume. To leave, use the app's stop or leave control.

GOOD TO KNOW

Android can also scan QR codes

Google says Pixel phones can join broadcasts by scanning a QR code, without digging into settings. Google also notes your hearing aid presets apply to the broadcast, so it's tuned to your hearing.

HEADS UP

Auracast is still rolling out

Auracast is new, and not every venue, phone or hearing aid has it yet. Older hearing loop systems (the kind marked with an ear symbol and a "T") still serve many theaters and churches, and they work with hearing aids that have a telecoil program. If you're not sure what your aids support, your audiologist will know.

FROM BILL

Curious about Auracast at home?

If you have Auracast-ready aids and want to try it with your TV, I'm glad to help check what your phone, aids and TV accessory support and get it set up. Call (330) 200-8042. Questions about your hearing programs go to your audiologist.

PART 5

Everyday Care

Charging, disposable batteries and cleaning. Five minutes a day keeps your hearing aids sounding their best — and keeps Bluetooth working, too.

CHAPTER 19

Rechargeable Hearing Aids and Chargers

Most new Bluetooth hearing aids are **rechargeable**: a battery sealed inside each aid, and a charging case or stand you set them in overnight, like a phone. Streaming uses more power than ordinary listening, so a day full of calls and TV will drain them faster than a quiet day.

The nightly routine

1. At bedtime, take the aids out and wipe them with a soft, dry cloth (Chapter 21).
2. Set each aid into its spot in the charger — the right aid in the right slot. Most chargers are marked, often red for right and blue for left.
3. Check that the charging lights come on. If they don't, reseat the aids, and make sure the charger itself is plugged in (or, for a portable case, has its own charge).
4. In the morning, take them out. On most rechargeable aids, removing them from the charger turns them on, and they reconnect to your phone by themselves.

> **TIP**
> **Charge them where you charge your phone**
> The easiest habit: put the hearing aid charger right next to your phone charger, so both get plugged in at the same moment each night. Our *Hearing Help Tech* manual suggests the same trick, and it really works.

Checking the battery

- **In the maker's app:** every app in Part 3 shows battery levels for each aid.
- **On an iPhone:** the Hearing control in Control Center or the Accessibility Shortcut shows hearing aid battery (Chapter 8).
- **On Android:** Quick Settings shows battery for connected hearing devices.
- **From the aids themselves:** many play a warning tone in your ear when the battery runs low. That's your cue to charge soon.

Charger care

- Keep the charging contacts clean and dry. A soft, dry brush or cloth is enough.
- Plug the charger into a regular wall outlet with the adapter it came with, or one your audiologist recommends.

- Some chargers also dry the aids or need the lid closed to charge; your aid's user guide will say.
- Traveling with your aids? Pack the charger and its cable. A portable charging case is handy for a weekend away, but it needs charging too.

HEADS UP

Rechargeable batteries slowly wear

Like a phone battery, the sealed battery in a rechargeable aid holds a little less charge as the years go by. If your aids no longer last through the day even with light streaming, tell your audiologist. Battery replacement is a job for the clinic or the maker — never try to open a rechargeable hearing aid yourself.

STAY SAFE

Heat, water and pets

Keep aids and chargers out of hot cars, away from the stove and radiators, and away from water. Store them where pets and small children can't reach them — dogs in particular seem to love chewing hearing aids, and swallowed batteries or parts are a medical emergency for children and pets alike.

CHAPTER 20

Disposable Batteries Without the Fuss

Some hearing aids — especially very small ones, and some models chosen for strength or long wear — use tiny disposable **zinc-air** batteries. They're simple and inexpensive, and you swap them every several days to a couple of weeks depending on the aid and how much you stream.

The four sizes, by color

Hearing aid battery packages are color-coded so you can grab the right one. Phonak and other makers list the same four standard sizes:

Size	Package color	Where you'll find it
10	Yellow	The smallest — tiny in-the-canal aids
312	Brown	Many receiver-in-canal and small aids
13	Orange	Larger behind-the-ear aids
675	Blue	Powerful behind-the-ear aids

Your audiologist or the aid's user guide will tell you which size you need. Write it on your cheat-sheet (Chapter 28) so you buy the right ones.

Changing a battery

1. Over a table (not the sink), open the battery door with a fingernail.
2. Tip out the old battery. A small magnet on the end of your cleaning brush, if yours has one, makes this easier.
3. Peel the colored tab off a new battery. The tab keeps air out; once it's off, the battery starts working, and it can't be put back.
4. **Wait about a minute** before putting it in, to let air activate it. Some makers suggest waiting longer, so follow your aid's user guide.
5. Put the battery in with the flat "+" side matching the mark in the door, then close the door gently. If it won't close easily, the battery is upside down — don't force it.

GOOD TO KNOW

Opening the door is also how these aids reset

For aids with replaceable batteries, opening and closing the battery door turns them off and on. That's also how Apple says to put them into pairing mode, and it's the first thing to try when Bluetooth misbehaves (Chapter 25).

STAY SAFE

Button batteries and children

Tiny batteries are dangerous if swallowed — for children, pets and adults with poor eyesight who might mistake them for a pill. Keep new and used batteries in their package or a closed container, never loose in a pill dish. If anyone swallows one, treat it as an emergency and get medical help right away.

Getting the most from a battery

- At night, open the battery door to switch the aid off and let moisture escape.
- Store spare batteries at room temperature, not in the fridge.
- Streaming calls and TV uses the battery faster — keep spares in your purse or pocket.
- If the batteries die much sooner than usual, mention it to your audiologist; it can be a sign the aid needs checking.

CHAPTER 21

Cleaning Basics: Wax, Domes and Moisture

Earwax and moisture are the everyday enemies of hearing aids. When an aid suddenly sounds quiet or dead, the cause is very often a blocked wax filter rather than a broken aid. A minute of care each day prevents most of that.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What a daily wipe does for you

Clean aids sound clearer, last longer between repairs, and keep their Bluetooth connection more reliably. It also means fewer "it's broken!" moments that turn out to be a speck of wax.

The daily minute

1. Take the aids out and look at them. Phonak's support pages suggest checking the earpiece every day for earwax and moisture.
2. Wipe the outside with a **soft, dry, lint-free cloth**, or a cleaning cloth made for hearing aids.
3. Use the small brush that came with your aids to brush wax gently away from the sound opening and microphone openings, holding the aid with the opening facing *down* so debris falls out, not in.
4. Set them in their charger, or open the battery doors, overnight.

HEADS UP

No water, soap or household cleaners

Phonak's guidance is never to use household detergents or soap on hearing aids, and it doesn't recommend rinsing them with water. Jabra Enhance's guidance is never to submerge them or use wet wipes. Unless your own aids' guide says otherwise, keep cleaning **dry**. Don't use alcohol, sprays or pins either, unless your audiologist shows you a product made for your aids.

Wax guards and domes

Part	What it is and why it matters
Wax guard (wax filter)	A tiny white filter at the tip of the speaker that catches earwax before it gets inside. When it clogs, the aid goes quiet. Makers sell replacement filters with a simple tool; how often you change it depends on how much wax your ears make.
Dome (ear tip)	The soft cap on the end of many receiver-in-canal aids. Domes wear and stiffen over time and are replaced regularly. A dome that falls off and stays in the ear canal needs a professional to remove it.
Custom earmold or shell	Custom-fitted parts. Wipe them daily; ask your audiologist how to clean any vents or tubing.

TIP

Have your audiologist show you once

Changing a wax guard or dome is easy once you've seen it done, and fiddly before. Ask your audiologist to show you at your next visit — and to give you the right replacement parts for your exact model, since they differ between makers. Ask, too, whether your clinic offers clean-and-check visits and what they cost.

Moisture and sweat

- Take the aids out before showering, swimming, using a hair dryer, or spraying hairspray.
- If they get damp, wipe them dry and let them sit somewhere dry. Don't use a microwave, oven or hair dryer to dry them.
- Ask your audiologist whether a drying box or a charger with drying makes sense for you, especially in humid summers.

STAY SAFE

Wax in your ears is a doctor question

If you find a lot of wax in your ears, or the aids keep clogging very quickly, don't dig with cotton swabs. The FDA lists "a lot of ear wax" among the reasons to see a doctor. Your doctor or audiologist can check and safely remove it.

PART 6

OTC Hearing Aids and AirPods Pro

Over-the-counter hearing aids and the AirPods Pro Hearing Aid feature, described the way the FDA and Apple describe them — what they're for, who they're for, and how they connect.

CHAPTER 22

Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids, as the FDA Describes Them

In 2022 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) created a new category: **over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids**, which you can buy in a store or online without a prescription. The rule took effect on October 17, 2022. Here is how the FDA itself describes them — in its words, not a salesperson's.

What the FDA says OTC hearing aids are

- They're real hearing aids — **medical devices** regulated by the FDA — not toys or simple amplifiers.
- They're intended for people **18 years of age and older** with **perceived mild to moderate hearing loss**.
- They let you control the settings and customize the aid yourself, through tools, tests or software. Some include a self-check of your hearing, and many use a phone app.
- They're **not** for severe or profound hearing loss. The FDA notes OTC aids are limited in how loud they can get and may not help enough with more severe loss.
- Anyone **under 18** needs a prescription hearing aid and should see a doctor, preferably an ENT.

Signs of mild to moderate loss, from the FDA's box label

OTC hearing aid boxes must list these signs. If they sound like you, an OTC aid *may* be an option:

- You have trouble hearing speech in noisy places.
- You find it hard to follow speech in groups.
- You have trouble hearing on the phone.
- Listening makes you tired.
- You need to turn up the TV or radio, and other people complain it's too loud.

The FDA's "see a doctor first" list

Every OTC hearing aid box must also carry a warning listing "red flag" conditions. If any of these apply, the FDA says to see a doctor, preferably an ENT, rather than starting with an OTC aid:

- Your ear has a birth defect or unusual shape, or was injured or deformed in an accident.
- You saw blood, pus or fluid coming out of your ear in the past 6 months.
- Your ear feels painful or uncomfortable.
- You have a lot of earwax, or think something could be in your ear.
- You get really dizzy or have a spinning or swaying feeling (vertigo).
- Your hearing changed suddenly in the past 6 months.
- Your hearing changes — it gets worse, then better again.
- You have worse hearing in one ear.
- You hear ringing or buzzing in only one ear.

STAY SAFE

Sudden change? Don't shop — get seen

If your hearing has dropped suddenly, the right next step is a doctor, not a store. The NIDCD treats sudden hearing loss as a medical emergency and advises seeing a doctor immediately.

OTC versus prescription

Type	In the FDA's terms
OTC hearing aids	For adults with perceived mild to moderate loss. Bought in a store or online. You set them up and adjust them yourself, usually with an app. Some sellers include remote support from hearing specialists.
Prescription hearing aids	The FDA says these are available only through a licensed hearing health care professional, who programs them to your hearing loss. They can suit all levels of loss.

The FDA also notes you can buy OTC aids from a hearing professional, who can test your hearing — and that you can ask for a copy of your hearing evaluation records and buy your aids elsewhere if you choose.

Pairing and apps for OTC aids

OTC aids pair the same way as prescription ones. Many — Jabra Enhance Select, for example — are on Apple's Made for iPhone list, so iPhone users pair through Accessibility (Chapter 5), and Android users use Chapter 6. The app does more of the work with OTC aids, since there's no fitting appointment: expect a setup walk-through and often a self-check of your hearing in the app.

HEADS UP

Read the box before you buy

The FDA requires OTC hearing aid boxes to show the return policy (or say there isn't one), what batteries they use, and whether a phone or remote is needed. The FDA also warns that phrases like "FDA Registered" or "FDA Certified" on a package may be misleading. And the FDA doesn't require a warranty — so read the return and warranty terms closely, and pick a seller that gives you weeks, not days, to try them.

GOOD TO KNOW

Report a problem to the FDA

If an OTC hearing aid injures you — a skin irritation, a burn from an overheated battery, a piece stuck in the ear, or a sudden worsening of hearing while using it — the FDA asks you to report it through its MedWatch program online or by calling 1-800-FDA-1088. And see your doctor.

CHAPTER 23

The AirPods Pro Hearing Aid Feature, as Apple Describes It

In September 2024 the FDA authorized the first over-the-counter hearing aid *software*: Apple's Hearing Aid feature for AirPods Pro. Apple now describes it for both **AirPods Pro 2** and **AirPods Pro 3**. Here's what Apple and the FDA say about it, without the marketing.

What Apple and the FDA say it is

- Apple calls it a **clinical-grade Hearing Aid feature for perceived mild to moderate hearing loss**.
- The FDA authorized it as OTC hearing aid software for people **18 or older** with perceived mild to moderate hearing impairment, which you set up yourself without a hearing professional.
- It works with compatible AirPods Pro and an iPhone or iPad (Apple's guide also covers adjusting it on a Mac). It isn't available in every country or region.
- It's a free software feature if you already own compatible AirPods Pro; there's no separate charge from Apple.

The Hearing Test, and what it is (and isn't)

Apple's **Hearing Test** uses your AirPods Pro and iPhone or iPad to check your hearing, taking about 5 minutes in a quiet room. Apple says your results show a hearing loss classification and recommend next steps, and you can export a PDF of your results to share with your hearing healthcare professional.

STAY SAFE

A good screening tool — not a diagnosis

The Hearing Test can tell you it's time to get your hearing looked at, but it can't examine your ears or find a medical cause. Share the results with your doctor or audiologist, especially if they show more than mild to moderate loss, or if your hearing has changed suddenly, one ear is much worse, or you have pain, ringing or dizziness.

Setting it up, in Apple's steps

1. Put in your AirPods Pro 2 or AirPods Pro 3 and make sure they're connected to your iPhone or iPad.

2. Go somewhere quiet. Open the **Settings** app and tap the **name of your AirPods** near the top of the screen.
3. Tap **Hearing Assistance** (if you don't see it, tap **Hearing Health** first), then follow the instructions on the screen. You may be asked to take the Hearing Test.
4. If you already have an audiogram from a hearing professional, you can use it instead: tap **Hearing Assistance**, then **Add Hearing Test Result**, and scan it with the camera or type it in.
5. If the test asks you to adjust your AirPods several times, Apple says you may need a different size of ear tip for a good seal.

Adjusting it afterward

In the same Hearing Assistance screen, Apple offers **Adjustments** for amplification, balance and tone, plus **Conversation Boost**, which focuses on the person speaking to you in a noisy place. You can also reach Hearing Assistance from Control Center. Apple's own advice is worth repeating: it can take time to get used to, so make **small adjustments over time** rather than big changes all at once.

AirPods Pro or hearing aids?

Option	In brief
AirPods Pro Hearing Aid feature	For perceived mild to moderate loss, adults only. Also earbuds for music and calls. Battery life is earbud battery life, and they're visible in the ear.
OTC hearing aids	Also for perceived mild to moderate loss, adults only. Built to be worn all day. Many connect to both iPhone and Android.
Prescription hearing aids	For any level of loss, fitted and fine-tuned by a professional.

Our *Hearing Help Tech* manual compares these options side by side, including cost. Whichever you're considering, a hearing check with a professional is a good first step.

GOOD TO KNOW

Hearing Protection is a different feature

AirPods Pro 2 and Pro 3 also have **Hearing Protection**, which Apple says helps reduce your exposure to loud noise around you, and is on by default. It's about protecting the hearing you have, not treating hearing loss. Apple says it isn't suitable for extremely loud sudden sounds like gunfire or fireworks.

FROM BILL

Happy to help with the iPhone side

The AirPods setup has a few moving parts — software updates, the right ear tips, finding the setting. I'm glad to help with the technology, and I'll always suggest a proper hearing check too. Call (330) 200-8042.

PART 7

Staying Safe and Fixing Problems

Buying safely, keeping your information private, fixing connection and sound problems step by step, knowing when it isn't the technology at all — and where to get help.

CHAPTER 24

Buying Safely, Scams and Privacy

Hearing aids are expensive and important, which sadly makes them a favorite target for high-pressure sellers and outright scams. A few simple habits keep you safe.

Red flags when shopping

- **"Bluetooth hearing aids" for a few dollars** in social media ads, often with a fake countdown clock. Genuine OTC hearing aids have "OTC" and "hearing aid" on the box, as the FDA requires. Cheap amplifiers aren't hearing aids.
- **"FDA Registered" or "FDA Certified"** splashed on the package. The FDA warns these phrases may be misleading.
- **No return policy**, or a very short one. The FDA requires the return policy on OTC boxes; read it.
- **Pressure to buy today**, or a "free hearing test" that turns into a hard sell.
- **Unexpected calls** about hearing aids, your hearing aid "warranty," or Medicare hearing benefits.

SCAM ALERT

Nobody legitimate needs remote control of your phone

Your audiologist's remote care happens *inside the maker's app*, at an appointment you booked. If someone calls out of the blue claiming to be from your hearing aid company, and asks you to install a different app, read them a code, or give a card number to "update your hearing aids," hang up. Call your clinic using the number on your paperwork, not one the caller gives you.

SCAM ALERT

Fake hearing aid apps

The makers' apps are free. An app that charges a subscription to "unlock" or "boost" your hearing aids isn't from your maker. Check the app's developer name before installing, and ask your clinic if you're not sure (Chapter 7).

Privacy in the apps

Hearing aid apps may ask for Bluetooth, location, notifications, microphone access and an account. Here's what each is generally for, so you can decide:

Permission	What it's for
Bluetooth	Required — it's how the app talks to your aids.
Location	Used for features like finding a lost hearing aid. Phones usually let you allow it only "while using the app."
Notifications	Low-battery reminders, remote care messages and updates.
Microphone and camera	Usually for video remote-care appointments with your professional.
An account	Needed for remote care and some health features. Use a strong, unique password; our *Passwords & Password Managers* manual explains how.
Health and activity features	Some apps offer optional health or activity tracking. That's your choice — turn on only what you want.

FROM BILL

Unsure about an ad, a call or an app? Ask first

If a hearing aid offer seems too good to be true, or a caller is rushing you, run it by me before you spend a penny — (330) 200-8042. Our *Spotting & Avoiding Scams* manual goes deeper on how these tricks work.

CHAPTER 25

Fixing Connection Problems

When hearing aids stop talking to the phone, the cause is almost always simple. Work down this list in order; most problems are solved by step three.

The five-step fix (any brand)

1. **Check the basics.** Are both aids charged (or fresh batteries in)? Is the phone's Bluetooth on? Is the phone within a few feet? Is the phone in Airplane Mode?
2. **Restart the hearing aids.** Put them in the charger and take them out again, switch them off and on, or open and close the battery doors. Wait a moment for them to start up.
3. **Restart the phone.** Turn it fully off and on. Apple lists restarting the iPhone as a first step when hearing aids don't appear.
4. **Update.** Check for phone software updates, update the maker's app, and let the app install any hearing aid firmware update.
5. **Forget and re-pair.** Remove the hearing aids from the phone (below), then pair them again from scratch as in Chapter 5 or 6, then reconnect the app.

Forgetting the aids for a fresh start

Phone	How to forget
iPhone, MFi aids	Settings > Accessibility > Hearing Devices, tap the aids' name, tap **Forget this device**.
iPhone, Phonak	Settings > Bluetooth, tap the circled "i" beside each Phonak entry, tap **Forget This Device**. Remove every Phonak entry.
Android	Settings > Connected devices, tap the Settings icon beside the hearing aid, then choose to forget or unpair it. Do this for both aids.
Jabra Enhance on Android	Jabra Enhance also suggests clearing the Jabra Enhance Select app's data before re-pairing.

Specific problems

What's happening	What to try
The aids don't show up when pairing	Apple's checklist: confirm the aids are compatible, are in pairing mode, restart the phone, and if they're paired to another Apple device (an iPad, say), unpair them there first.
They're listed but grayed out (iPhone)	Bring them close to the phone. Apple suggests unpairing and pairing again.

What's happening	What to try
They keep disconnecting	Keep the phone nearby. If you have an iPad too, the aids may be switching to it (Handoff, Chapter 5). Check the batteries. Apple also mentions wireless interference from other devices.
Only one aid connects	Restart both aids together. On Android, make sure you paired both — Google's steps say to wait for the first to connect, then tap the second.
The app can't find the aids	Close and reopen the app, check its Bluetooth and location permissions in the phone's settings, and make sure no other phone nearby is connected to them.
Calls don't come through the aids	Check that the phone and aids support streaming together (Samsung notes both sides must support it). On iPhone, check the aids are the chosen sound output.

TIP

One phone at a time helps

If a spouse's phone or an old phone in a drawer was ever paired with your aids, it can grab the connection. Turn off Bluetooth on the other device, or forget the aids on it, while you sort out your own phone.

HEADS UP

After a big phone update

Major phone updates occasionally upset hearing aid connections for a while. If problems start right after an update, check for a newer version of the maker's app and a newer phone update, then forget and re-pair. If it still won't work, the maker's support line or your clinic will know about any known issue.

CHAPTER 26

Fixing Sound Problems

Sound problems are a mix of technology, cleaning and fit. Start with the simple, physical checks before blaming Bluetooth.

What you notice	Try this first	If it keeps happening
Quiet or no sound in one aid	Check the battery; clean the sound opening; change the wax guard (Chapter 21); restart the aid.	Call your audiologist — the aid may need service.
Whistling or squealing	Reseat the aid snugly in your ear; check the dome or earmold is on properly.	Ask your audiologist to check the fit, or your ears for wax.
Streamed sound is choppy	Keep the phone closer, with no body between it and your ears; turn off Wi-Fi hotspots or other Bluetooth gadgets nearby; restart both.	Update the app and firmware; ask the maker about your phone model.
Streaming fine, but the room sounds muffled	Switch back to your main program in the app; check for wax.	Ask your audiologist.
Sounds tinny or sharp	Use the app's streaming equalizer (streaming only), or try a different program.	Mention it at your next visit.
Everything sounds too loud or harsh	Turn the volume down, or take the aids out.	Call your audiologist — don't keep adjusting.

TIP

Earwax first, always

When an aid suddenly goes quiet, a clogged wax guard is far more likely than a broken aid or a Bluetooth fault. Change the wax guard before anything else — it takes a minute and often fixes it on the spot.

When a TV streamer goes silent

1. Check the streamer's light is on, and its power plug is in.
2. Check the optical cable is firmly in at both ends — the tip should glow red at the TV end when the TV is on.
3. Check the TV's sound output setting still sends sound to the optical port (TV updates sometimes reset it).
4. Make sure your aids are switched to the TV stream (button, app or automatic).
5. Unplug the streamer for 10 seconds, plug it back in, and re-pair if needed (Chapter 17).

STAY SAFE

If it hurts, stop

If the aids hurt your ears, make your ears itch or sore, or you develop a rash, stop wearing them and contact your audiologist or doctor. Fit problems aren't something to push through.

CHAPTER 27

When It's Not the Tech: Signs to See a Professional

Some problems look like technology but aren't. If any of these happen, no app setting will help — please call the right person.

What you notice	Who to call
Sudden hearing loss or a sudden change	**Seek care promptly.** NIDCD treats sudden hearing loss as a medical emergency and advises seeing a doctor immediately. Don't wait to see whether it passes, and don't try to fix it with louder settings.
Ear pain, discomfort, or fluid, blood or pus from the ear	See your doctor.
New ringing or buzzing, especially in one ear	Tell your doctor or audiologist.
Dizziness, spinning or swaying	See your doctor.
Hearing that goes up and down	See your doctor or audiologist.
Needing more volume week after week	Book a hearing check with your audiologist.
One ear suddenly much worse than the other	See your doctor promptly.

Getting the most from your audiologist visit

- Bring your phone with the maker's app installed, plus your hearing aids and charger.
- Jot down the situations where you struggle — the restaurant, the car, the TV, the phone.
- If you've taken a hearing test in an app (such as Apple's), bring or send the results. Apple lets you export them as a PDF.
- Ask about remote care, so small tweaks can happen from home in the future.
- Ask which accessories (TV streamer, table microphone) work with your exact model.

FROM BILL

I'll handle the gadgets; your audiologist handles your hearing

I'm always glad to help with the technology. But if you tell me about pain, sudden changes, ringing or dizziness, I'll gently send you to your doctor first — that's the right order. Once you've been seen, I'm happy to come back and get everything connected again.

CHAPTER 28

Getting Help & Your Cheat-Sheet

You've made it through the whole manual. Here's where to get help, and a one-page summary to keep beside your charger.

Who to call for what

For	Call
Your hearing, your ears, your programs	Your audiologist or hearing care professional. Your doctor for pain, sudden changes, ringing or dizziness.
A broken or lost hearing aid, warranty	Your clinic first; they deal with the maker. For Jabra Enhance Select, contact Jabra Enhance support.
App problems	The maker's support pages (each maker has a help center) or your clinic.
Pairing, streaming, TV streamer setup, phone settings	Bill's Home Tech.

How Bill can help

This guide is free, and so are all of Bill's manuals. When you'd like a hand in person or over the phone, Bill's help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. Call **(330) 200-8042**, or book at **billshometech.com/book**. If I'm with another customer, my AI receptionist, Sophie, can answer the phone and take a booking for you.

- Pairing hearing aids with a new phone, iPad or Mac.
- Installing the maker's app and getting it connected.
- Setting up a TV streamer and the TV's sound settings.
- Getting your phone, Wi-Fi and app account ready for a remote-care visit with your audiologist.
- Showing family members how it all works.

GOOD TO KNOW

What Bill won't do

I won't change your prescription settings, run hearing tests, or tell you which hearing aid you medically need. Those belong to your audiologist and doctor. What I do is make the technology around your hearing aids work smoothly.

Your hearing aid cheat-sheet

Print this page and keep it by the charger. Fill in the blanks once.

What	Mine
My hearing aids	Make: _____ Model: _____ Fitted on: _____
My app	_____ (the free app from my hearing aid maker)
Battery size (if not rechargeable)	_____
My audiologist	Name: _____ Phone: _____
My doctor	Name: _____ Phone: _____
Bill's Home Tech	(330) 200-8042 · billshometech.com/book · $49 remote · $99 in your home

The short version

When	Do this
Pair an iPhone (most brands)	Settings > Accessibility > Hearing Devices > Pair MFi Hearing Device.
Pair an iPhone (Phonak)	Settings > Bluetooth, with the aids in pairing mode; or pair in the myPhonak app (Infinio Ultra and newer).
Pair an Android	Settings > Connected devices > Pair new device (or Accessibility > Hearing devices). Samsung: Accessibility > Hearing enhancements > Hearing aid support.
Pairing mode	Open and close the battery doors, switch off and on, or take out of the charger.
Quiet aid?	Battery, then wax guard, then restart.
Won't connect?	Restart aids, restart phone, update, forget and re-pair.
Every night	Wipe dry, charge (or open the battery doors).
Sudden hearing change, pain, ringing, dizziness	Call your doctor. Sudden loss: seek care promptly.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You've got this

Bluetooth hearing aids can turn phone calls, FaceTime and the evening news back into pleasures instead of strains. Take it one feature at a time, lean on your audiologist for your hearing and on me for the gadgets, and enjoy hearing the people you love.

— Bill