



Article Side

Hearing Simplified: the Workings of a Standard Hearing Aid by [Rebecca Kavel](#)

Article published on February 11th 2012 | [Health](#)

The invention of the hearing aid may have been the product of two of the greatest inventions in history: the telephone and the transmitter. Basic designs of the early hearing aids were like a downscaled version of the telephone: having a trumpet as the speaker and a small tube as the receiver. Later on, hearing aids began to have carbon transmitters installed that allowed sounds to be turned into signals and vice versa.

Modern hearing aids have considerably shrunk in size but have grown more powerful in getting clearer sounds to the ears. From simple trumpets and tubes, the hearing aid people know today is built with advanced electronics for the partially or totally deaf to hear more clearly. The normal hearing aid is comprised of four different parts: the microphone, the amplifier, the receiver, and the power source. Its overall function can be traced back to the simplistic designs of the 1900s.

Microphone: Most hearing aids have microphones placed on the main mechanism unit together with the amplifier. Similar to the microphone used in film and TV, the microphone in the hearing aids gathers sound in the environment. The microphone is also tasked with turning raw sound into electrical signals where it is due for processing by the amplifier. For hearing aids deeply implanted in the ear, the microphone may be a small dot protruding just outside the ear.

Amplifier: The amplifier is the heart of any hearing aid because of its responsibility of processing the electrical signals back to pure sound. As the name implies, the amplifier makes the electric signals strong enough for the person to hear the sound. The amplifier is as tiny as an electronic chip you usually find in computer systems. Nevertheless, its many transistors are strong enough to aid the deaf in hearing.

Receiver: The receiver of the

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Article Keywords:

hearing aid, hearing aid accessories