

Hearing Aids - An Unexpected Way to Improve Your Sex Life

Can They Save Marriages?

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You've read the books on romance. You've devoted time and attention to improving your sex life. But you are probably ignoring a small electronic device that could really light a fire in your intimate relationships. You don't need to search for it in disreputable stores or web sites.

It's a hearing aid, and you can get one if you make an appointment with a doctor or a hearing health professional.

Nearly 1 in 5 Americans Baby Boomers (aged between 41 and 59) and 1 out of 14 Gen-Xers (29-40) now have hearing loss, according to research by the Better Hearing Institute. But only 1 out of 4 of them wear hearing aids. They are passing up a tool that research shows will not only boost their self-esteem and reduce anxiety; it may well make their sex lives more fulfilling.



Sexologists and couples therapists tell us that the best aphrodisiac in the world is effective communication. You don't need to be an expert on intimacy to understand that when two partners –or would-be partners-- are at a romantic, candle-lit dinner and one has to shout across the table in order to be heard, it isn't exactly setting a mood for lovemaking.

But the impact of even mild hearing loss on relationships is usually more subtle. It can make a date partner seem remote and unresponsive, when in fact he or she just might be failing to hear certain key phrases or missing the subtle nuances of conversations. He or she will feel rejected when in fact he or she very much wants to be close to her or him. That is not the kind of date that is conducive to intimacy. The same problem often haunts couples in long-term relationships when one of them develops hearing problems but refuses to acknowledge or deal with them.

"It's hard to feel romantic and attracted to someone who never seems to listen. But that's how someone with untreated hearing loss often comes across," says Dr. Fred Piercy, a couples therapist in Blacksburg, Virginia. His wife Susan is an audiologist who wears a hearing aid.

But when the Piercys treat an unhappy couple that includes someone with untreated hearing loss, and that person gets a hearing aid, it often helps the spark to return to the

relationship, both in and out of bed. You might even think of a hearing aid as Viagra for the ears!

Sex often depends upon the right atmosphere, the proper build-up to get one or both partners in the mood. If you or your partner has trouble hearing, a hearing aid can help make sure that romantic cues are picked up and that sweet nothings whispered in the ear are heard. Even something as routine as listening to music together, which is the prelude to sex for some couples, becomes much easier.

Many people think hearing aids will make them look older and less attractive. But they have an out-dated view of what modern hearing aids look like. Some are nearly invisible and fit in the ear canal or are very inconspicuous. Some can even be flaunted – manufacturers have begun to come up with hearing aids that are veritable fashion statements, in different colors and sleek designs. There is just no excuse to permit an obsolete stigma to stop you from treating your hearing problem. You'll be much sexier if you do something about it.