

Reconnect with Your World: The Social Power of Hearing Aids

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A person with hearing loss often cannot understand what other people are saying. We hear the statement, “I can hear, but I can’t understand” quite often when people first visit our office for their initial hearing evaluation. Because of this, they have a tendency to not join in on conversations or different social activities. It’s hard to be social when you’re trying to figure out what is being said or how to answer something that you didn’t understand; a lot of the time, they just sit with a frown and then they’re not approachable, so people refrain from talking to them. It’s an uncomfortable situation, and what do people do when they’re uncomfortable? They take themselves out of that situation.

For that reason, people with hearing loss will isolate themselves and just stay in a quiet, nonsocial environment like their own living room because “I can’t hear anything anyway, so why go to anything?” That’s when their social circle begins to shrink. Thus, it makes perfect sense that JAMA just found that older adults who seek hearing loss treatment retain an average of one additional person in their close social networks.

I have seen many

situations in The Hearing House Wausau clinic where after someone is properly fit with hearing aids, their



face lights up and they smile. They start going to church again because they can understand what is being said; they start playing cards again because they can now join in the conversations; they start going to restaurants again and start volunteering again. They’re comfortable in social situations again. I had a family member tell me her mother was a completely different person since she started to wear hearing aids. When they start joining in on these different activities and aren’t sitting at the table with a frown on their face, they’re more approachable and people will start talking to them again. They’re asked to do things again, their social circle begins to regrow.

Hearing loss has also been associated with dementia for all the same reasons as mentioned above. When a person isolates himself because they no longer

understand things, the brain is no longer being stimulated with the different sounds and it loses its ability to

process those sounds. I like to compare it with a broken arm. If your arm is in a cast for six weeks, when the cast comes off, it’s considerably weaker than the other arm because it hasn’t been used. The same thing is true with the brain. If it’s not being stimulated all the time, it becomes weaker.

There are a lot of positive outcomes that can happen when a person is properly fit with hearing aids. Today’s hearing aids are no longer the hearing aids from years ago. They are constantly analyzing the environment a person is in and making thousands of decisions every second. Most hearing care professionals, like us at The Hearing House’s Beltone network, will do complimentary hearing evaluations as well as an in-office demonstrations of hearing aids. Also, even if you don’t think you have a hearing loss, it’s good to get a test so you have a baseline

to compare to for decades ahead, if you do start to experience difficulties in social environments.

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WAUSAU 24 from page 1

bring their skills, careers, families—and ultimately, investment—to the area.

“Wausau 24 has grown into the largest 24-hour festival in the Midwest. It’s exciting to build this race community and welcome athletes from across the country to our trails.” Rebecca Tuley, Race Director.

With hundreds of athletes competing on foot and bike in 5K to 24-hour formats, and families enjoying food, music, and the outdoors, Wausau 24 serves as a living example of that transformation in motion.

The weekend begins

Friday night (7/25/25) with the Wausau Trail Run featuring 5K, 10K and Half-Marathon distances starting at 7:00pm. The marquee mountain bike race, Wausau 24 features a 12-mile lap traversing the Nine Mile single track and ski trails. Racers will compete solo or on teams to complete as many laps as possible in 6-hour, 12-hour and 24-hour categories.

All bike race categories start at 10:00am Saturday morning (7/26/25). Exciting spectator times would be Saturday 9:00am-11:00am or 8:00pm to 10:00pm. The event delivers a festival type experience with live music and complimentary food and beer to all racers. Friday night runners will

enjoy the sounds of The Foxfire Affair and the tastes of several food trucks. The primary social event of the weekend for the bike racers is the Saturday night serving Red Eye Brewing beer and pizza party with the red dirt/Alt country sounds of Old Pine Road. The Saturday night social is open to the general public.

The kids have the chance to test their young race skills in the Wausau 12 or 24 minute bike races featuring a 1 mile beginner singletrack loop. A kids trail run is offered for those who prefer to test their ability on foot. The trail run is at noon followed by the bike race at 1:00pm. The kids’ events are sponsored by the Kocourek Kids Foundation.

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