

# Why Your Lifestyle -- Regardless of Age -- Needs to be Considered When Selecting Hearing Technology

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Ah, high-technology consumer-oriented electronic devices. They're everywhere we look in our daily lives. From the L.E.D. read-out timer-controlled automatic coffee maker to the hands-free cellular phone to digitally enhanced music and television systems, high-tech products are all the rage, enhancing our lives in ways that couldn't have been imagined less than a generation ago.

And judging from some of the advertisements that are out there one might get the impression that high-tech hearing devices are the end-all answer to communication difficulties for someone with hearing difficulty. People are bombarded with ads on hearing devices telling them that by purchasing the "latest and greatest" from Brand ABC that they'll immediately hear like they did when they were a teenager. Being good consumers, they research for hours on end, and then decide on a product with high expectations.

But for someone with hearing difficulties, taking that path is like trying to follow a map without directions nor a compass.

That's because the first step towards better hearing lies not in selecting a hearing device, but rather in examining one's lifestyle and listening needs.

Regardless of age, people have different lifestyles. While one person might lead a very active life, another seemingly similar individual might lead a more quiet life. If both have similar levels of hearing difficulty, should they both select the "latest and greatest" from Brand ABC? Of course not!

Instead of focusing on the hearing device one of the first things I like my patients to do is talk with me about their lifestyles and how that lifestyle is affected by their hearing and communication difficulties. Whenever possible, I also like to involve a spouse or significant life partner; oftentimes those close to the patient can offer helpful insight about their loved one's difficulties as well as positive support.

Only *after* this communication process --- coupled with a thorough audiological assessment -- is complete is it time to start discussing the appropriate level of hearing technology.

That is the path that will lead to successful use of today's hearing technology .... because hearing is a wonderful gift!

**About the writer:** Crystal Chalmers, Au.D., is an AudigyCertified™ Doctor of Audiology, the owner of North State Audiological Services in Chico, and a member of AudigyGroup, the nation's largest member-owned association of independent hearing care professionals.

Since 2006, AudigyGroup has interviewed over 5,000 of the 18,000 audiologists in the United States, yet has selected only 250 to be members in this elite association. AudigyCertified™ is a trade-mark of AudigyGroup, LLC.

To learn more about Dr. Chalmers, her practice, and AudigyGroup visit online at [www.nsaudiology.com](http://www.nsaudiology.com) or call (888) 844-7024

## **SIDENOTE**

### **A Slice of Life (Well, 4 of Them, Actually)**

**Following are four different lifestyle categories. Where do you fit in?**

**Active lifestyles:** Characterized by a variety of video and audio entertainment, diverse restaurant dining, sporting events, outdoor activities, demanding careers, group participation, family gathering, movies, driving, mall shopping, and church activities. Frequent background noise.

**Casual Lifestyles:** Typically include activities such as regular conversation, frequent television, quiet restaurant dining, small meetings, family gatherings, driving, shopping trips, movies, and weekly church services. Occasional background noise

**Quiet Lifestyles:** Often feature one-to-one conversations, some television and radio, quiet shopping, trips, and weekly church services. Limited background noise.

**Very Quiet Lifestyle:** Comprised of activities in and around the home, such as limited television, radio, or recorded books, and small church services. Rarely includes background noise. –*Crystal Chalmers, Au.D., Doctor of Audiology*