

Your questions - Onwards

Christine So I went home, and after a couple of days the beeps turned into what I can only describe as a Dalek voice. I couldn't tell female from male voices, so once again trying to help myself, I found a really good way was to listen to the 6 o'clock news - listen carefully, didn't always make a lot of sense and then I would listen to the exactly the same news later on. Then after a few more days I found I was picking up more and more of what the newsreader was saying. I was also picking up more of what my husband was saying, and at the end of 2 weeks, I was able to distinguish his voice as a male voice, and my daughter's voice and my grandchildren, and it just progressed from there really. I came back for tunings and tweakings with the processor and it gradually became much clearer.

In my case I would say after about a year to 18 months I found that it really reached a plateau and the benefit I get from it hasn't really changed from that time.

Ann I rushed out into the garden. I could hear the birds and, of course, I could hear the doorbell, and the cooker timer, and the microwave, and the clock ticking and everything - I have got a cuckoo clock as well, and I hadn't heard any of those things for a very long time. It was a novelty really. Even the sounds from the PC and mobile make when they come on and off for Skype or whatever

Stan After the initial tuning you have a series of appointments just to tweak the settings because things do change slightly even after days, not to mention weeks. So the first thing that happens is you have your initial tuning, 2 or 3 days later you come back for the first tweak, a week after the initial tuning you are back again for another bit of a tweak and then at one month, three months and six month intervals you have further tweaks and then hopefully after that you should be up and running perfectly.

Tayseer After my switch on, at this time I was on holiday - the summer break between my first year of University and second year. It was quite a relaxing time. I remember that I used to go out for walks and just tried to use the implant as much as possible, and that actually helped my brain to adapt to the sound. So it was not stressful at all because I didn't worry, I didn't have to worry about going to lectures, or socialising with people. It was quite a relaxing period.

Christine You mustn't expect to hear from a cochlear implant the same way as normal hearing or even with your hearing aid. It is different, but your brain is a clever organ, and it soon works out what it is hearing. Within 2 weeks, I could hear that that was my husband's voice or my daughters voice, my grandchildren, my friends. I knew all their voices and still do now.

- Janet I think it was about a week and I knew I was hearing really quite well. Gradually I think I got to 76% [score on the BKB sentence test] at my annual check-up, but I think at 3 months I was scoring 40% which was a big improvement from zero [pre-implant]. I know I could hear a lot more even though I could still struggle a bit with conversations. But it was a great improvement.
- Ian I am now a year on, and my perception of speech has improved steadily but probably is now starting to plateau. I don't think it's probably going to improve much from now. I was delighted at the 1 year assessment, which was just last Thursday, when Nicci, my audiologist, took me through what they call the BKB hearing test – that test is when a person speaks fairly short phrases and these are projected to you through a loud speaker in front of you. They are phrases like 'the dog is barking', 'the rain is falling', 'the train was late today' and you have to repeat what you hear, or how much of this you hear. At the end of this Nicci came back from the control room, came to the door, smile all over her face and said, "You have got 100%!" and she was delighted and because she was delighted, then so was I.
- It's been a great journey and although things are different, they are so much better than they ever were.
- Brian You will soon adapt to the new sound. You will know your partner, your husband, your wife. The voice is changed, but once you have got used to it, so what? It is still the same person. I listen to bird songs now. I have had to recognise the songs again, and match them to the bird initially, but once you have done that, you know a blackbird, a robin: they are similar, but I can separate them. I can hear great tits, with their 'teetcher, teetcher, teetcher,...'. You will learn quickly because you want to.
- Janet I do still wear the hearing aid on the other side because I feel it just seems to round off things a little bit, even though it sounds useless on its own. If I had another implant, I would throw my hearing aid, believe me!
- Christine At first I did continue to wear my hearing aid [on the other side] but after a very short time, before the first [month] assessment, I found that my brain seemed to listen more on the implant side and I was finding [the hearing aid] a distraction, so I don't wear it and I haven't worn it since and that is for 8 years now. I just wear the implant and that for me is perfectly adequate.
- Katherine I wear the hearing aid [on the other side] to give me 'surround sound'. It's better for my balance, it is better for a group environment. It is just something that equips me better on the phone or just to go out for a walk. That doesn't mean it's the same for everyone, It's finding the right balance for you.
- Britt-Marie I still use the hearing aid [on the other ear] because I have been told to use everything: implant, hearing aid, lip reading, anything that helps you hear better.
- Christine One of the greatest joys for me was to be able to hear the birds singing and go down to the beach and hear the waves crashing in. Simple things like driving a car and hearing the indicator. One thing I find really beneficial (being a senior 70 year old and having senior moments) is now if I have had the lights on and I go to do shopping or something, get out the car, it will tell me that I have left the lights on! Simple things like that it is so reassuring. All of those things you will hear with the implant that you probably have long not heard with your hearing aid.