

# HEARING LOOPS CHANGE YOUR LIFE

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Approximately 36 million of American adults report some degree of hearing loss. About a quarter of those have hearing aids, a number that would surely increase if hearing aids could double as wireless, customized loudspeakers.



For many people with hearing loss, even with hearing aids, sounds become unclear when auditorium or TV loudspeakers are at a distance, when the context is noisy, or when room acoustics reverberate sound. Many people with hearing loss – or even normal hearing – refrain from participating in certain activities because of difficulty hearing. A hearing loop magnetically transfers a sound signal to hearing aids and cochlear implants that have a tiny, inexpensive “telecoil” receiver. This transforms the instruments into in-the-ear loudspeakers that deliver sound customized for one’s own hearing loss. Even for people with normal hearing, portable receivers are available to use with the system.

A hearing aid compatible loop system delivers customized sounds directly through your hearing aid directly to your ear. It allows use of a mic + telecoil (M/T) setting on the hearing aid, enabling one to hear the room conversation or one’s phone ringing. Anywhere there is a loop system, all that is needed to do is activate the telecoil that is already built into your hearing aid. There’s no need to get up, seek out, and wear conspicuous equipment. Additionally, the sound is contained in one’s ear, without bothering others nearby. There is no need to juggle between headsets and hearing aids and there are no hygienic concerns about putting in or on one’s ear what has been around others’ ears.

So, how do loop systems work? Simple: A person speaks into a microphone. The current is amplified and sent to a magnetic cable loop installed in the venue thus surrounding the listeners, creating a zone. The magnetic field then delivers the amplified, high quality signal directly to the listener’s hearing aid. Loops can accommodate one person or more than one-hundred at a time.

Where can hearing loops be used? Hearing loops work in many environments: the home, houses of worship, auditoriums, theatres, courtrooms, just about anywhere people gather. Hearing loops also work in transient venues such as airports, at ticket windows, and at drive-up order stations. The New York City Transit Authority is installing hearing loops at nearly 500 subway information booths. In the future, loops will be installed in buses, taxis, autos, etc. Just look for the Hearing Loop sign to find a looped venue.

Hearing loops have been in use in Europe for decades. They have now found their way to this country. In the past few years alone, hundreds and hundreds of churches, schools, theatres, meeting places, etc., have been looped in the Midwest. The results have been overwhelming; people who never before could participate in lectures or sermons are now coming out of their shells and enjoying these activities once again.

Looping is not difficult. Nor is it expensive. But it can change your life. So let’s get into the loop and let’s loop Orange County.

For more information on Looping and how to get your venue looped, contact Harriet Jacobster, AuD, Lyric Audiology, at 845-395-0300.