



Summer 2014

The McGurk Effect?

This phenomenon occurs when a spoken syllable is paired with a different but similar lip movement. A listener will hear one syllable with their eyes closed, and another syllable as they watch a speaker's lips. In most classic McGurk experiments, the syllable in question is "ba." When "ba" is visually synced with the lip movement of a different syllable, "da", listeners will hear "ba" with their eyes closed and "da" when they watch the speaker's lips.** While the McGurk effect is a perceptual "trick", it effectively demonstrates the relationship between hearing and seeing. For the hearing-impaired to take full advantage of the McGurk effect, they should always look at a speaker's lips. By doing so, a listener is effectively bolstering their hearing ability with visual input, which can be much more reliable. Conversely, the hearing-impaired should not look away from a speaker during conversation — they could end up hearing something else entirely! Looking at a speaker and "seeing what they're saying" is a simple but incredibly efficient listening technique that can greatly improve quality of life and allow hearing-impaired individuals to step smoothly into conversations with confidence.

Retrieved from the "Hearing Care Blog":
<http://hearingcareblog.com/2014/07/21/mcgurk-effect-look-people-speak/>

**Go to alberhearing.com to see a video demonstration of the "McGurk Effect"

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Hearing Aids and Brain Preservation

A 2011 study by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania revealed that hearing loss can cause accelerated degeneration in the region of the brain responsible for processing auditory data. It is also believed that this degeneration causes an increase in the effort required to comprehend speech — even for those with a mild hearing loss. And the researchers' solution for delaying brain atrophy and decreasing the effort in comprehending speech? Hearing aids.

The lead author of the study, Jonathan Peelle, Ph.D., a research associate in UP's Department of Neurology said, "As hearing ability declines with age, interventions such as hearing aids should be considered not only to improve hearing but to preserve the brain."

The results of this study not only stress the importance of wearing your hearing aids daily, but also the importance of monitoring your hearing health through regular evaluations and recalibrating your devices if any changes to your hearing have occurred.

If you know someone who could benefit from our services, or if it's been a while since your last appointment, don't hesitate — please give us a call. We're here to answer your questions, create strategies, and provide solutions for all types of hearing loss.

*see the entire University of Pennsylvania study here:
http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/news/News_Releases/2011/08/mild-hearing/

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Your hearing is such a vital part of how you communicate with others, yet it's all too easy to underestimate the importance of checking at least annually to make sure your hearing and hearing aids are in their best working order and that you're hearing as well as you can. Please don't hesitate to call our office if you've notice any changes in how you're hearing. Feel free to stop by at your convenience Tuesday through Friday between 9 and 4:30 and have us check and/or clean your hearing aids. We can also check to see when you're due for your annual reassessment and schedule an appointment.