

# Cochlear Family

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Keeping you supported, connected, inspired

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# Nomiki's **seven steps** to reduce listening fatigue

**Do you ever feel tired, frustrated, or overwhelmed after listening for a long time? Or maybe you sometimes zone out, lose focus, or miss important details during conversations?**

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you might be experiencing listening fatigue.

Listening fatigue is commonly reported by recipients. It happens when the brain gets tired from focusing on listening, especially in difficult situations such as noisy places, group conversations, or virtual meetings.

Beyond feeling tired, it can affect your mood, concentration, productivity, and social interactions. That's why it's important to recognise the signs and learn ways to cope with it.

It's also important to take appropriate breaks and time to recover from listening fatigue.

Nomiki, a Cochlear™ hearing implant recipient is also a mentor for Hear For You: an Australian organisation that helps teenagers with hearing loss connect with deaf mentors, shares some tips from her experience with hearing fatigue. Remember to talk to your hearing healthcare professional to see if these would also work for you.



Nomiki, Cochlear™ Nucleus System recipient

Here are her tips:

**1 Know your triggers**  
One of the challenges of listening fatigue is identifying your triggers. Think about what situations cause you to fatigue and how can you manage them?

**2 A top cause of listening fatigue is background noise, which makes it harder to hear and understand speech.**

Nomiki suggests changing your sound processor settings. She uses Cochlear™ Nucleus® Smart App to adjust the settings to help with certain listening environments.

“I change the settings on the app by having it on ‘Restaurant’ mode and also use ForwardFocus^ to reduce as much background noise as possible. This can reduce fatigue as you don’t need to exert that effort to filter speech from noise.”

**3 Know where to sit in restaurants and cafes**

“Another tip at restaurants would be to sit with your back against the crowd, rather than sitting against the wall. This is a tip from my audiologist as the sound processors will be picking noises from the front. Also, moving to a quieter part of the room (even outside) can help significantly, with the bonus of fresh air.”

**4 Let others know**  
Sometimes the stress or anxiety of trying to understand what new people are saying can cause listening fatigue, especially if they have unfamiliar accents, speak fast, or mumble. Nomiki explains her situation and ask for clarification or repetition if needed.

“It’s completely up to you whether you want to disclose it, she says. “Sometimes, I like to explain, especially if I am really struggling to understand the person, so it prevents any misunderstandings.

“Group situations can be tricky. Having someone you trust helps in that they can relay the information to you afterwards.”

**Talk to your clinician to find out if ForwardFocus is right for you.**

**Sometimes, I like to explain, especially if I am really struggling to understand the person, so it prevents any misunderstandings.**

Nomiki, Cochlear™ Nucleus System recipient

## 5 Take breaks

Virtual calls and meetings can be exhausting as they require a lot of concentration and attention.

“Some of my friends like to take breaks in between meetings. For me personally, I prefer to take 2-5 minutes (if permitting) in between meetings and I like them to be in a block (say, all meetings in the afternoon). Then I can have a proper 30 minute break where I can relax my mind and refocus onto the next thing.

“I either lie down and decompress, go outside and play with my dog or take a walk. It’s amazing how much fresh air can help. I also like to take off my [sound processors], so it’s all peace and quiet.”

## 6 Look after your physical and mental health

“Coming from a deaf or hard-of-hearing perspective, we exert more effort and can tire out quickly throughout the day,” Nomiki says.

She recommends doing something you enjoy and find therapeutic. “For me it’s going for a swim, where I can switch off. Getting exercise in the morning has helped me so much. By getting some movement in first thing in the morning, it boosts my mood and energy level.”

## 7 Connect with support groups

Finally, one of the best ways to deal with listening fatigue is to connect with the deaf community and support groups where you have the chance to share experiences, tips and learn from each other.

“I joined Hear for You as a mentor to give back to the community. Little did I know how impactful it was to my own life even. I made friends with the mentors and we love to share tips and tricks to going about things. For me, it’s so much more fun to help others, and be on this journey together.”

**Talk to your clinician to find out more.  
Cochlear’s rehabilitation resources.**

Nomiki, Cochlear™ Nucleus System recipient



# What to consider when upgrading your child's sound processor

If your child has a hearing implant, you may wonder when to consider getting them a new sound processor. As they grow and their needs evolve, there are some points to think about when deciding.

Whether your child is starting a new phase of their education or career, or they seem to be struggling with their current device, there are many reasons to consider upgrading to a new sound processor. Research shows that a new sound processor could improve your child's hearing<sup>1,2</sup> and that better hearing could help your child grow in confidence and independence.<sup>3,4</sup>



### Teens share their insights

Each new sound processor that Cochlear releases offers new technology and benefits that could help your child. Here's what teens had to say about their experience upgrading their sound processors.

### Improved hearing experience

"Immediately I could start hearing differences in sounds – the tiniest little whisper from the air conditioning or talking in conversations in other rooms," says teen recipient Soli.

"The quality of sound in the Kanso 2 is a huge advancement from the quality of sound in previous sound processors, because it's much crisper; it's much sharper," Soli adds.

The Kanso 2 Sound Processor also offers ForwardFocus technology^ which can decrease noise coming from behind to help focus on face-to-face conversations.\*

"ForwardFocus is a lifesaver, especially in loud situations where you're trying to have a one-on-one conversation," says Ava, who has found the feature helpful with school activities. She currently uses Kanso 2 Sound Processors on both ears. "I've upgraded three times that I can remember."

If you'd like to learn more about ForwardFocus, talk to your clinician.

### Direct stream from their smartphones#

Martina, a teen recipient from Argentina, has upgraded four times and currently uses Nucleus Kanso 2 Sound processors on both ears. She clearly remembers the first time she streamed music to her sound processor.

"I played a song and wow! All the music went straight to the sound processor. I was fascinated because it was something that never happened to me before."

Soli also loved being able to stream music: "The thing that has changed the most is connectivity to my electronic devices. It's so easy. It makes phone calls and listening to music an unbelievable experience."

Ava, Cochlear™  
Nucleus System  
recipient



**Talk to your hearing healthcare professional to understand for advice about your child's hearing.**

### Tips for listening to music

Ava agrees: “I love listening to music with direct streaming. The quality is incredible.” She also offers some advice for those getting started. “I find music with less layers much easier to hear rather than music that has many. For example, I don’t love very heavy rock music.”

“I also recommend reading the lyrics as you listen, it makes it easier to pick them out. Finally, I often find the first time I listen to a song it doesn’t sound as great as the second or even third time I listen to it. I can take a few listens for me to really appreciate the music.”

### Apps make life easier

Ava enjoys the convenience of changing her settings using the Nucleus Smart App.\* “One of my favourite changes is that now I can control everything on my mobile phone. From there I can turn the volume up and down and I can connect everything there.”

### Comfort is key

Often, upgrading to a new sound processor means a smaller and lighter device that can go a long way to improving comfort and discretion.

For Martina, this was a factor in her decision to upgrade to a Kanso 2 Sound Processor: “Honestly, it was a good decision – the best one I made – because this one is smaller than Kanso,” says Martina.

“The original Kanso was a bit bigger and was uncomfortable sometimes, but not always. And this Kanso 2 is smaller and it feels very comfortable.”

### Take time to adjust

When you decide to upgrade your child’s device, it’s important to remember to be patient as your child gets used to a new device and support your child through that process.

“Take breaks if you need to but keep trying with it. Even if you aren’t used to it at first, you will get used to it!” says Ava.

To help your child with a new sound processor, ask your clinician for guidance on how transition to their new device or what programs and features they’ve enabled. A new sound processor will be a new hearing experience, so take the time to become familiar with it and remember to follow the guidance of your hearing healthcare professional.

**Learn more about upgrading to our latest devices.**

Martina, Cochlear™ Nucleus System recipient



# Discover Caroline's extraordinary journey into the world of live music



Caroline, Cochlear™ Nucleus System recipient

## Do you love the idea of a live music concert, but worry about the sound experience in a stadium with thousands of loud people?

Caroline, a 62-year-old grandmother, was probably more excited than most other concert goers after finally finding the courage to attend to a live music performance in Sydney recently.

“We’re going to the Paul McCartney concert, which is my first concert in years. [Before now] I would have had a lot of anxiety going to that.”

The game changer for Caroline has been her new Cochlear™ Nucleus® 8 Sound Processor. Its automated ForwardFocus^ feature will automatically reduce the background noises behind her.

At concerts in large stadiums, “the automatic ForwardFocus, that will be tremendous... And what I didn’t realise was a huge bonus – the clarity of the sound”.

Caroline was well accustomed to the benefits of ForwardFocus with her previous sound processor, but the difference since upgrading

is that now you have the option to have the feature automatically adjust to your listening environment.

“I was a huge user of ForwardFocus with my Nucleus 7 Sound Processor, but it meant that I had to take out my phone and change it in the [Nucleus Smart] App.”

“Now I have it on ‘automatic’, which also helps when I’m walking in and ordering a coffee – because every café has lots of noise going on, people talking, the rattling of knives and forks, and cups and saucers.”

The automated feature has also made social interactions easier – Caroline can seamlessly join conversations without pausing to take out her phone and turn on ForwardFocus.

“I just don’t have to think anymore. I can leave the phone in my pocket and concentrate on getting on with communicating with my family and friends.”

ForwardFocus isn’t the only new benefit Caroline is finding with her Nucleus 8 Sound Processor – the smaller size and weight were also motivating factors in upgrading.



Caroline, Cochlear™ Nucleus System recipient

### Size and weight impact on daily life

“I loved my Nucleus 7, but I heard about the launch of the Nucleus 8 and was curious to know more about it. One of the things that drove me to actually apply for it was the weight.”

“There was a 13% decrease in weight. And I thought, gosh, that’s a great reason to upgrade.”

For Caroline, wearing the sound processor for more than 14 hours a day made the size and weight crucial factors. With its reduced size,<sup>7</sup> she barely notices her sound processor during Pilates and yoga.

“It’s really, really light. And that makes a big difference. Size and weight are very important to me.”

### Direct streaming

For Caroline, the other benefits include the stereo sound when direct streaming to her sound processor and hearing aid: “Where do I start? It’s fantastic.”

“I try to walk every morning. Often, I listen to a podcast or I’m listening to an audiobook, and I can go through a book a week and it just means that you’ve got constant entertainment without the noise of cars passing. I also listen to the radio. I love listening to the news in the morning, catching up on what’s happening in the world. I love jumping in the car, setting up the audiobook or the podcast, and then I’ve got two hours uninterrupted listening.”

Being a bimodal cochlear implant recipient where she has a hearing aid in her other ear, Caroline loves to listen to music in stereo in both ears. “Sometimes the drums are on the one side and the instrument, different instruments on different sides, and I’m mesmerised by it. I am a big, big fan of direct streaming.”

### Streaming helps with rehab

Caroline used to listen to podcasts and audio books as a way to train her brain to expand her understanding of words, particularly with different voices and accents. “I really do think that direct streaming has made a difference, not just for my enjoyment and quality of life. But also, it’s a huge contributor to my rehabilitation.”

“The Nucleus 7 gave me the gift of hearing and took that burden away. And it was a huge; this burden was relieved. I felt it. My shoulders were lightened, and it was wonderful.

“Now with the Nucleus 8, the burden is gone – I have the clarity. So now I have the bravery and the courage to go into the gatherings without hesitation because I don’t have to think of anything. I just get on with it.

“I feel a little bit lighter and probably braver, having never looked back; it really, really has enhanced my quality of life.”

**It’s really, really light.  
And that makes a big  
difference. Size and  
weight are very  
important to me**

Caroline, Cochlear™ Nucleus  
System recipient

# A musician's tips to help you reconnect with music

**For Richard Reed, a professional blues musician, it was critical to re-introduce music to his life after losing his hearing. But he realised that enjoying music after receiving a cochlear implant requires time and effort.**

“When I first got my cochlear implant, music sounded like a wall of loud, rhythmic white noise. And singing sounded like a bunch of cartoon weasels arguing,” he remembers.

Richard learned that a cochlear implant user's brain needs to re-learn how to interpret sounds.

Remember to talk to your hearing healthcare professional for guidance on the type of music that would best suit your hearing needs.



“You use a different part of your brain to process music, so music and singing can be demanding with a cochlear implant. Pitch is different, timbre is different, even acoustic instruments can sound electric. It’s a whole new challenge.”

One way to help re-train your brain to appreciate music is by creating a playlist.

To help you get started, and to expose you to a range of music, Richard has devised a Spotify playlist, Richard’s CI Music Beginners. The list of 46 pieces encompasses music with different instruments from different genres, including flamenco guitar, drums, cello and even ukuleles, as well as a range of songs with lyrics.

**Here’s a selection from the playlist:**

- Fur Elise, Boccherini Guitar Quartet
- Killing Me Softly, Gypsy Flamenco Masters
- I Walk The Line, Johnny Cash
- Heartbreak Hotel, Elvis Presley
- Mercedes Benz, Janis Joplin
- The Girl From Ipanema, Antonio Carlos Jobim & Frank Sinatra
- Funky Drummer, James Brown
- Don’t Know Why, Norah Jones
- Up On The Roof, The Drifters



To help you create your own playlist, here are six tips from Richard:

### 1 Start with music you know

Simple and familiar melodies will always be the gold standard for initial forays into music with a cochlear implant, Richard says.

### 2 Keep it simple at first

Start with a plain melody performed on just one or two instruments because rich, complex sounds are harder to understand. Gradually introduce new but similar music and extend your library slowly.

### 3 Introduce variations of familiar music

Some cochlear implant users find it difficult to enjoy familiar music because it suddenly seems so different. Start with a new song in a similar style, perhaps by a favourite artist, and slowly try to appreciate new favourites.

“Once in a while, try listening to different versions of a song from your childhood. There’s a nice rendition of **“Peter and the Wolf” on Spotify** with narration by David Bowie, and there are snippets on YouTube.”

### 4 Repeat, repeat, repeat

Richard says that repeated listening is one of the big keys to success, so don’t give up if music doesn’t sound the way you remember it.

“Sometimes we must find music merely tolerable before finding it enjoyable,” he says.

### 5 Challenge yourself when you’re ready

Consider listening to difficult pieces occasionally. By comparison, simpler music will seem easy!

### 6 Be open-minded

Richard says you should be prepared to experiment and try not to let genre matter too much. Richard’s own playlist includes Mozart, a guitar version of Für Elise by Beethoven, Johnny Cash and Janis Joplin. “Take this challenge as your chance to make new favourites, to find music where you don’t expect it,” he says.

Sometimes we  
must find music merely  
tolerable before finding  
it enjoyable

Richard, Cochlear™ Nucleus  
System recipient

Listen to Richard’s Spotify playlist here.

# Why changing your microphone protectors matter

**Keeping your sound processor in good condition doesn't always require a call to the service team or a trip to the clinic. Surprisingly, many sound quality issues reported by users often stem from a simple, overlooked component: the microphone protectors.**

Did you know that changing your microphone covers is crucial to maintain sound quality? It's a small but vital part that can significantly impact your hearing experience. Dust and dirt can clog or obstruct the protectors, disrupting sound from getting through to the actual microphones.

To help maintain optimal sound quality, it's important to replace your microphone protectors every three months, or earlier if you notice a loss in sound quality or the microphone protectors look dirty.

Certain weather conditions and activities might prompt more frequent changes. Talk to your healthcare professional to know what frequency would work better for you. If you or your child wear two sound processors, make sure you replace both sets of microphone protectors simultaneously.

On the Cochlear™ Nucleus® 8 Sound Processor and Nucleus 7 Sound Processor, the microphone protectors are included in the microphone cover so they are integrated and easily replaced.

Here's a simple two-step guide tailored to Nucleus 8 Sound Processor users:

## **Step 1: Remove the old microphone cover**

Gently pull the coil cable grip straight out of the sound processor without twisting. Lift the old microphone cover from the bottom edge using your fingernail until it comes off.

## **Step 2: Install the new cover**

Place the replacement microphone cover onto the sound processor, ensuring a secure fit. Apply firm pressure on both ends of the cover until you feel a satisfying click. Re-insert the coil cable into the processor until it clicks, avoiding any twisting.

**A helpful tip:** Mark your calendar or set a reminder in your diary every three months for replacing your microphone protectors.

Regularly changing your microphone protectors isn't just a routine task; it's a simple way to maintain the sound quality your processor provides. By staying proactive with this quick maintenance, your device will be in good condition and potentially save unnecessary trips for repairs.

**Watch these how-to videos for your device:**

- If you have a Nucleus 8 Sound Processor
- If you have a Nucleus Kanso 2 Sound Processor



# Share your story with Cochlear Family

Cochlear Family wants to hear from you. Share your story, tips, tricks, advice, ideas and any questions you might have.

Get in touch >

## Hear now. And always

Cochlear is dedicated to helping people with moderate to profound hearing loss experience a world full of hearing. As the global leader in implantable hearing solutions, we have provided more than 650,000 devices and helped people of all ages to hear and connect with life's opportunities.

We aim to give people the best lifelong hearing experience and access to next generation technologies. We collaborate with leading clinical, research and support networks to advance hearing science and improve care.

That's why more people choose Cochlear than any other hearing implant company.

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[www.cochlear.com](http://www.cochlear.com)

\* Cochlear's range of Smart Apps and support apps are available on App Store and/ or Google Play. For information regarding the sound processors, operating systems and devices that are compatible with the Smart Apps and support apps, visit "<http://www.cochlear.com/compatibility>" [www.cochlear.com/compatibility](http://www.cochlear.com/compatibility)

# For information regarding the compatibility of Cochlear's Sound Processors with Apple or Android devices, visit [www.cochlear.com/compatibility](http://www.cochlear.com/compatibility)

^ ForwardFocus is a clinician-enabled, user-controlled feature.

ForwardFocus is a clinician-enabled feature that can be user-controlled or automated

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Please seek advice from your health professional about treatments for hearing loss. Outcomes may vary, and your health professional will advise you about the factors which could affect your outcome. Always follow the directions for use. Not all products are available in all countries. Please contact your local Cochlear representative for product information.

Views expressed are those of the individual. Consult your health professional to determine if you are a candidate for Cochlear technology.

ACE, Advance Off-Stylet, AOS, Ardium, AutoNRT, Autosensitivity, Baha, Baha SoftWear, BCDrive, Beam, Bring Back the Beat, Button, Carina, Cochlear, 科利耳, コクレア, 코클리어, Cochlear SoftWear, Contour, コントウア, Contour Advance, Custom Sound, DermaLock, Freedom, Hear now. And always, Hugfit, Human Design, Hybrid, Invisible Hearing, Kanso, LowPro, MET, MP3000, myCochlear, mySmartSound, NRT, Nucleus Osia, Outcome Focused Fitting, Off-Stylet, Piezo Power, Profile, Slimline, SmartSound, Softip, SoundArc, SoundBand, True Wireless, the elliptical logo, Vistafix, Whisper, WindShield and Xidium are either trademarks or registered trademarks of the Cochlear group of companies.

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