

Are you using these **10 TOOLS** in your practice?



10 Tools All Hearing Professionals Should be Using

by Adam Dawson

The list of tools and instruments that audiologists use is vast and ever-evolving. As time marches on, new technologies are created to make your work easier and more efficient. However, this list is for the essentials – the kind of products and tools that will keep your practice humming along day in and day out.

For you hearing healthcare professionals out there, whose ability to effectively treat patients relies on preparedness, consider this list of must-have audiology equipment.

#1. Otoscope

It would be difficult to provide a thorough hearing exam without an otoscope. Since an otoscope allows your first look into a patient's hearing health, it's important you have one that best suits you.

Having an otoscope with the proper magnification and lighting is important. But so is something as simple as how it feels in your hand. There are many types of otoscopes, from digital and video otoscopes, to those that are compact and more reasonably priced.

#2. Infection Control Products

The last thing you want is to endanger staff or patients with an unsanitary office. Keeping your clinic stocked with something as simple as audio wipes can help. They're made with hospital-grade disinfectant, and are alcohol-free, meaning they won't harm any hearing instruments or ear molds that are made of rubber, silicone, or acrylic materials.

To clean all non-disposable instruments, and for serious infection control, you'll also need

an ultrasonic cleaner and solution, preferably professional grade.

#3. Ear Wax Removal System

When patients begin to notice that they're having trouble hearing, most will overlook the role ear wax buildup can play. While removing it may be a hassle, it's also a quick fix that can instantly improve hearing.

Wax-softening drops and a bulb syringe are often sufficient for removing ear wax buildup. If the patient's ear wax isn't too hard and dry, it may even be something you can do in the office. Otherwise, you'll have to send the patient home to continue trying, or use a curette to remove the unwanted wax.

#4. Curettes

For any health professional, earning the trust of your patients is critical for the success of your clinic. Imagine the different impressions each of these might make: You send the patient home with an ear wax removal kit because it couldn't be done in the office. Or you grab a curette and help that patient hear better immediately. Doing so will allow you to add another service to your practice, thus increasing its value.

#5. Cerumen Forceps

Extended-wear hearing devices are becoming more common, so having a pair of cerumen forceps in your clinic is a must. Whether you're fitting a patient with an extended-wear device, or you are removing one, forceps are an essential tool in your kit.

Sometimes ear wax buildup cannot be removed with either a removal kit or a curette. In these stubborn cases, you can always reach for your cerumen forceps. Training is key here, as you don't want to make contact with the canal wall while removing the wax.

#6. Earmold Impression Supplies

A busy audiology clinic will do a few ear impressions each week. For the sake of ease and speed, consider using an impression gun with disposable cartridges.

If your patient has a small ear canal, or if you're doing a particularly deep impression, having a slim cartridge will help. In these cases, it also helps to use a lubricant, as it will increase patient comfort and make your job easier.

#7. Hearing Aid Parts

Being able to quickly and easily fix a patient's hearing aid will likely make that patient happy, as opposed to ordering the parts and making them wait a week.

Having a good variety of replacement and repair parts will ensure that you're in position to handle the most common repairs on the spot: microphone covers, earhooks, battery doors, receivers, receiver wires, etc. These parts are usually not interchangeable between different manufacturers, so keeping them labeled and organized will be key to keeping them sufficiently stocked.

#8. Batteries and Related Products

It's important to keep a health stock of hearing aid batteries. You'll also want to have a battery tester – an indispensable tool to make certain your patients are getting the most out of their hearing aid batteries. A magnetic battery insertion and removal tool is also a must-have, as are cleaning brushes, wax picks, and a tube and vent cleaner.

#9. Moisture Control Products

Moisture-related problems will always be a concern for those working with hearing aids, whether in the clinic or when providing take-home products.

A dehumidifier and vacuum system are great ideas for the clinic, while a dry hearing aid kit will help your patients store their instruments between visits. Depending on your climate, your clinic may require a professional-grade system to keep moisture under control.

#10. Audiometer

There are a number of audiometers that audiologists can use to evaluate the hearing health of their patients. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and some are more advanced than others. For instances, one audiometer may perform only screening tests, while another may perform a full battery of screening and diagnostic tests. With so many audiometers out there, it's critical to understand what your needs ensure you make the best decision.

One of the most innovative audiometry products on the market is GSI AMTAS, a patient-directed evaluation

tool that's available in two different versions (AMTAS Pro and AMTAS Flex). It essentially automates the testing process, allowing you to see other patients while one is taking the test. As a result, your time is freed up to see more patients and complete other day-to-day tasks.

This list is hardly comprehensive, but it does touch on the essential must-haves for audiology clinics and hearing aid dispensers. Making sure your clinic has all the tools it needs translates to better care and happier, more satisfied patients.

About the Author

Adam is the Digital Marketing Coordinator at e3 Diagnostics. His interest in hearing healthcare is driven by his passion for music because he feels everyone should be able to clearly listen to Pet Sounds at least once in their life. In his free time, he enjoys playing video games, digging through record stores for classic vinyl, shooting hoops, and writing stories.