

# IMPROVE COMMUNICATION WHILE WEARING A MASK

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- USE VISUALS
- GESTURE AND POINT
- WRITE IT DOWN
- USE CONTEXT CLUES
- REPEAT THE PART YOU HEARD
- BE PATIENT
- CLARIFY IF UNSURE
- REPHRASE INSTEAD OF REPEATING
- MOVE AWAY FROM NOISE

Communication is a 2-way street between the talker and the listener. Wearing masks and social distancing has made it more difficult for even people with normal hearing to communicate, let alone people with hearing loss! Here's some good communication strategies for both the talker and the listener aka everyone:

- **USE VISUALS:** Hold up the object you're talking about or pull up a photo on your phone
- **GESTURE AND POINT:** Act it out or show what you're talking about by pointing

- **WRITE IT DOWN:** If you're really struggling a pen and a pad might help. I'd recommend a fat sharpie and white paper and writing in big letters so the other person can read it from 6 feet away.
- **USE CONTEXT CLUES:** The day after Mother's Day someone's probably asking 'how's your mum?' not 'how's your rum?'
- **REPEAT THE PART YOU HEARD:** Show that you're trying by repeating what you thought you heard so the other person only needs to say the missing target word.
- **BE PATIENT:** Our brains are all experiencing more stress which makes it more difficult to process any information- speech included. Expect to have to repeat yourself.
- **CLARIFY IF UNSURE:** "Did you say 15 one-five or 50 five-oh?" is a common one I ask on the phone.
- **REPHRASE INSTEAD OF REPEATING:** Don't keep saying the same sentence the same way if it's not working- re-word and add more context to make your message more clear.
- **MOVE AWAY FROM NOISE:** You already have a degraded speech signal and distance making it harder to hear, extra noise will make things that much harder.