

Definition of Key Terms

Back to Basics Refers to the realization that actual delivery of the prescribed amplification, with all the benefits of the manufacturer's impressive and sophisticated sound processing technology, can only be achieved with sufficiently-deep insertion of the hearing aid speaker into the patient's ear canal. In other words, "Because I can't get my speakers into my ears, what good are my expensive hearing aids?"

Caregiver In our materials we refer to two types of caregiver: the Family Caregiver and the Professional Caregiver. Because both types are often entrusted with hearing aid insertion, the ability to manipulate, control, and steer the speakers is most helpful.

Delivery System Refers to one of two means of rendering *Gruv Button*™ for utilization by hearing aid users and caregivers. The original delivery system is the "built-in" delivery system, in which the *Gruv Button*™ is built into the speaker during speaker manufacture. The second, and new, delivery system is the award-winning *Gruv Button*™ Retrofit.

Difficulty With Hearing Aid Insertion Well-known within the industry, and now documented in the *2022 Hearing Industries Association's MarkeTrak Survey* which found 40% of new hearing aid users find it difficult to insert their hearing aids. Experienced hearing care professionals often point to the finger slipping off and past the speaker due to its current design features. Some users also experience physical limitations, or have challenging ear canals that interfere with proper insertion. Insertion difficulty results in frustration, stress, and hearing care abandonment.

Diseases and Disorders Many hearing aid users also suffer from diseases and disorders, including Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, arthritis, muscular dystrophy, stroke, and diabetic neuropathy. In many cases, those users experience physical limitations, including tremor, dexterity issues, numbness, stiffness, diminished sensation, elbow issues, shoulder issues, or other orthopedic issues.

Ergonomic Design Refers to the designing and arranging of things people use so that people and things interact most efficiently and safely.

In this case, it means designing the hearing aid speaker's end-surface to interface with the fingertip. (See: Universal Design)



Fingertip Interface The point at which the fingertip and the end-surface of the hearing aid speaker interact. Because people use their fingertips during the final step of insertion, we redesigned the end-surface of the speaker to interface with, and fit, the fingertip. *Gruv Button*™ provides that interface.

Gruv Button™ Designed for accessibility and designed for all, *Gruv Button*™ is the easiest way for hearing aid users and their caregivers to insert the speaker into the ear canal. It is comprised of three components including a *Fingertip Support*™, *Fingernail Backstop*™, and *Fingernail Gruv*™. The term *Gruv Button*™ refers to the original "built-in" delivery system, first published in *The Hearing Review* in 2016.

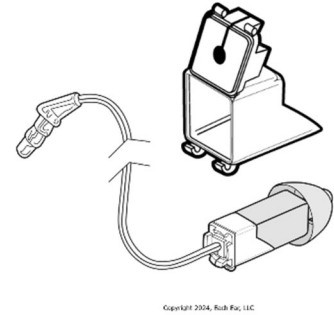
Because it improves the user experience with easy, instinctive, and sufficiently-deep insertion, *Gruv Button*™ benefits the entire industry, including users, caregivers, hearing care professionals and manufacturers.

Gruv Button™ Retrofit Refers to the just introduced, “retrofit” (or second) delivery system for *Gruv Button™*, as an alternative to the “built-in” delivery system, which occurs during original manufacture. The *Gruv Button™ Retrofit* makes it easier for hearing aid manufacturers to monetize it, produce it, and distribute it through their vast network of hearing aid clinics.

Gruv Button™ Retrofit is the winner of the global 2024 HEARING TECHNOLOGY INNOVATOR AWARD from the *Hearing Health & Technology Matters* organization.

With an estimated retail price of \$15 or less, *Gruv Button™ Retrofit*, by definition, is a “reasonable accommodation” because it ensures that persons with disabilities experience functional hearing aid insertion on an equal basis with others.

Gruv Button™ Retrofit



Hearing Aid Refers to the Receiver-in-Canal (RIC) style hearing aid. Eighty-one percent (81%) of all hearing aids are RIC style, where the speaker is inserted into the ear canal. (See: Speaker)

Hearing Aid Abandonment Frustration with hearing aid insertion causes many to abandon their hearing care entirely, which can lead to social isolation, cognitive decline, and other health, safety, and lifestyle related consequences.

Hearing Aid Kit What the manufacturer typically supplies: the new hearing aid, with related fitting and cleaning supplies and components. These components are typically available for separate purchase. Offering *Gruv Button™ Retrofit* provides flexibility, in that it could easily be included in such kits or made available for separate sale.

Inclusive (See: Universal Design)

Instinctive Refers to a hearing aid user’s innate and automatic tendency to complete the insertion process by using their fingertip.

“It Fits the Fingertip!” Each Ear LLC’s description of *Gruv Button™* and *Gruv Button™ Retrofit*. A neat summarization of the products’ benefits. It says it all!

Let Me Gruv! A growing movement to urge the hearing aid manufacturers to monetize and produce the *Gruv Button™ Retrofit* – and distribute it through their networks of local hearing aid clinics.

Physical Limitation (See: Diseases and Disorders)

Prototypes Early models of the product; they were exhaustively tested, which confirmed the product’s efficacy.

They prompted testimonials and comments from hearing aid users, caregivers, and hearing care professionals – requesting hearing aid manufacturers to make *Gruv Button™* available to users. (See: “Testimonials and Comments”)



Receiver (See: Speaker)

Receiver Migration Our ear canals move when we talk or chew, which helps to clean the ear. However, this movement can also ease speakers out of the ear canal, especially if the speaker has not been inserted sufficiently deep into the ear canal.

Retention Tail The plastic tail that attaches to the end of a hearing aid speaker and helps keep the speaker in the ear canal by looping inside the concha of the outer ear.

Our product can also be made available with a retention tail; it should replace the current retention tail, thereby providing all the benefits of both *Gruv Button™* and the retention tail. And because it can be made available with or without a retention tail, it provides flexibility to both hearing care professionals and hearing aid users.

Moreover, because hearing care professionals have utilized retention tails for years, they are already familiar with the *Gruv Button™ Retrofit* retrofitting process.

Current Retention Tail



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Gruv Button™ Retrofit



Without a retention tail



With a retention tail

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Speaker The colloquial term for “Receiver”, which is the technical term used within the industry. Manufacturers produce speakers in many shapes and sizes due to proprietary predilections and amplification capacity. Because of this considerable variety of shapes and sizes, and because they already produce retention tails to fit each of their speakers, the best provision of the *Gruv Button™ Retrofit* is for hearing aid manufacturers to produce it and distribute it through their vast network of hearing aid clinics.

Stigma A term often used to describe an attitudinal barrier that keeps people from pursuing hearing healthcare or wearing their hearing aids. It is apparent that easier, facilitated hearing aid insertion results in improved user experiences. This generates additional, positive word-of-mouth and awareness, thereby lessening the stigma associated to hearing aid use.

Sufficiently Deep Refers to inserting the speaker deeply into the ear canal, as intended by both hearing aid manufacturers and hearing care professionals. Sufficiently deep insertion is required for users to receive their individually-prescribed amplification, thus permitting them to enjoy the wonders of this industry’s impressive and sophisticated sound processing technologies.

For the user, sufficiently deep insertion results in optimal hearing and understanding, a more secure positioning of the hearing aid, reduced fear of loss, reduced audio feedback, and a less noticeable hearing aid.

Without sufficiently deep insertion, the opposite outcomes apply. This results in frustration, stress, and returns-for-credit – or, expensive hearing aids sitting unused in a dresser drawer.

Universal Design Refers to the design of products, environments, programs, and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Technically, the best application of universal design would be to utilize the “built-in” delivery system, but because that hasn’t happened, we are advocating for the “retrofit” delivery system. (See: *Gruv Button™ Retrofit*)

