



THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NEUROTH GROUP

**ON A DYNAMIC  
EXPANSION COURSE**

**Y  
E  
A  
R  
L  
Y  
2  
0  
2  
3**

 **NEUROTH**

# MISSION & VISION

## OUR VISION & MISSION AS THE NEUROTH GROUP.

As a quality-conscious, reliable professional for better hearing, we support our customers in all life situations and help them to have a better life – since 1907! Our aim as a corporate group is to become the first port of call when it comes to hearing – for a lifetime.

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE SINCE 1907.

Better hearing, better living.

**“Better hearing, better living” – this guiding principle has been driving Neuroth for over 115 years.**

**Hearing Power – that is what Neuroth stands for together with its customers. An overview of our mission & vision.**

## OUR AMBITION.

We enable Hearing Power and make our customers self-confident. We create dedicated ambassadors for Hearing Power. We want to get away from taboo, stigma and hearing impairment, in favour of understanding, optimisation and Hearing Power. Our aim is to change how hearing aids are viewed and to give hearing solutions the status and value they deserve in the present day – with a positive approach.

# PREFACE

"yEARly" is back! The Neuroth Group annual report is not only about the highlights of our business year 2022/23 but especially about interesting stories all about Neuroth and the world of hearing.



Once again this year, these are compiled by a young editorial team from the study course "Journalism & PR" at FH Joanneum (University of Applied Sciences) in Graz – directed and coordinated by Thomas Huber (Lead of Corporate Communications/Neuroth) and Mares Kohlmayr (Corporate Communications/Neuroth). We would like to express our thanks for the great cooperation!

**The yEARly team (from left to right, standing): Celina Erjautz, Mares Kohlmayr (Neuroth), Sarah Schober, Carolin Luttinger, Amelie Schenk, Matthias Adler, Felix Ernst, Daniel Ghanimi, Jan Sacher, sitting: Sarah Romauch, Marlies Lubi, Gudrun Reimerth (FH Joanneum), Jonas Langreiter, Daniel Schipfer**

Enjoy reading!

LEGAL NOTICE: Media owner: Neuroth International AG, Paula-Neuroth-Straße 1, A-8403 Lebring; Tel.: 00800/8001 8001; E-Mail: office@neuroth.com - Responsible for the content: Corporate Communications, Neuroth International AG, Paula-Neuroth-Straße 1, A-8403 Lebring; E-mail: office.at@neuroth.com - Chief Editor: Thomas Huber; Editors: Mares Kohlmayr, Gudrun Reimerth & FH Joanneum "Journalismus & PR" - Graphic concept and layout: Zeitgeist Agentur GmbH - Photos: Neuroth International AG, Jork Weismann, Thomas Gobauer, Gerhard Schmolke, Alexander Mattersberger, Georg Aufreiter, Stefan Simonovic, Unsplash, iStock, Toby Romeo/Huy Tran, eora - Effective date: March 2024; © 2024 - Printing: Medienfabrik Graz - Typesetting and printing errors excepted.

“As the Neuroth Group, we can look back proudly on the year 2023 – thanks to the great commitment of our #weareneuroth team in all our eight countries where we are now successfully represented. Thanks to our colleagues in all the hearing centres and head offices!

It was a year in which we were able once again, with special dedication, to give many, many people greater Hearing Power and therefore also a better quality of life. We are continuing to build on this positive development and to spread the spirit of our Hearing Power.



*L. Schinko*

**CEO Lukas Schinko**  
on behalf of the C-level  
of the Neuroth Group

# 2023: OUR HIGHLIGHTS

The last Neuroth year was defined by further expansion steps, new (digital) innovations and a strong team spirit under the motto #weareneuroth. An annual review that is at the same time a table of contents.

# 10

## NEUROTH ON A DYNAMIC EXPANSION COURSE

The Neuroth Group continued its dynamic expansion course in the business year 2022/23. New branches were opened, especially in Southeast Europe and Switzerland. Austria's leading hearing acoustics company therefore now boasts a total of 280 hearing centres. You can read as from **PAGE 10** what successes Neuroth celebrated in the last business year and what potential the CFO of the Neuroth Group, Michael Paul, sees for the future.



"The last business year was particularly successful. The positive development of the company underlines the success of our expansion strategy in general."

CFO MICHAEL PAUL

# 30

## HEARING TEST APP: THE HEARING POWER TEST FOR HOME USE

The new Neuroth app has been available since mid-June 2023, with a digital hearing test that is very easy to download. Everybody can therefore have a hearing test in their pocket and on their smart-phone and the Neuroth Group is forging ahead with digitisation for its customers. Read more about this on **PAGE 30**



## HEARING SOLUTIONS FOR OUR YOUNGEST CUSTOMERS

Neuroth would like to ensure greater Hearing Power also among children and young people. Paediatric audiology has therefore been an important area since 2005. The expert Heidi Neuroth and the customer Elisabeth W. recount their personal experiences of dealing with children with hearing impairments. **PAGE 26**

# 26

"I look forward to close cooperation with our country organisations."

CSO BERNHARD PAYER



Bernhard Payer has been strengthening the C-level of the Neuroth Group since the beginning of 2024 and as Chief Sales Officer he is responsible for the sales organisations, operations and the department "Sales Performance Excellence".



## 38

**A NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR EARWEAR**

The EARWEAR product range – the Neuroth trademark for individually customised hearing protection – has been extended. Due to appropriate filters for the many different everyday situations where hearing protection is needed, there are suitable products for musicians, DJs or those attending concerts, as well as for swimmers or for a good night's sleep. EARWEAR HUNT is a new solution, as individually customised hearing protection for hunters. Read more about this from **PAGE 38**

“I am happy to be part of the C-level from now on and to further strengthen the marketing focus within the Neuroth Group.”

**CMO STEFAN ELWISCHGER**



Stefan Elwischger, the former Head of Corporate Marketing, was promoted to Chief Marketing Officer in spring 2024.

## 34

**NEUROTH'S NEW OWN TRADEMARK IS CONQUERING THE HEARING AID MARKET**

Hearing aids as lifestyle objects: With Viennatone, the Neuroth Group has developed its first exclusive own brand. This provides new possibilities for Neuroth customers who want to give their hearing aid a smart upgrade. The aim is to empower younger people and those who are young at heart to perceive their hearing solution not as a burden but as a long-term inherent aspect of an active and fundamentally positive lifestyle.

**PAGE 34**



“With our new exclusive trademark Viennatone, we are providing individuality and flexibility for our potential customers. In addition, the Neuroth exclusive brand offers a new sales experience – because: Viennatone expresses a lifestyle.”

**CCO DANIELA MAAG**

**THE FIRST HEARING ACOUSTICS APPRENTICES IN PRIMARY TRAINING**

To enable comprehensive training in the hearing acoustics industry also for young people, since last year Neuroth has been offering a traditional hearing acoustician apprenticeship, alongside extra occupational training. As part of dual training over multiple years, our apprentices learn everything they need as a primary course of training. You can read as from **PAGE 46** how this new experience has been going for them so far and what is special about primary and secondary training.

## 46



“We achieved a lot together once again last year: from further expansion steps to new digital customer services and hearing solutions. We are especially proud that Viennatone is now Neuroth's first own trademark – it will be a real upgrade for our customers.”

**CEO LUKAS SCHINKO**

## 52

**BECAUSE WE CARE ABOUT PEOPLE**

As a family-owned enterprise, it is important to Neuroth to take social responsibility – also for the environment. For example, in the last business year we were able to save electricity in production and CO<sup>2</sup> in package shipments. Neuroth also made an important contribution through cooperation with charitable causes and donation campaigns. See **PAGE 52**



“To strengthen our team spirit and to motivate our colleagues to have a healthy counterbalance to everyday working life, we as the #weareneuroth

team have taken part in sports events such as the Wings for Life Run, various business runs or cycling events. We are also steadily developing our corporate culture.”

**COO BARBARA TSCHELIESSNIGG**

# ON A DYNAMIC EXPANSION COURSE.

How has the Neuroth Group developed over the past year? Where was the strongest growth and what potential does Southeast Europe in particular harbour for the future? A review and outlook.

## EXPANSION LED TO A TURNOVER INCREASE

The Neuroth Group continued its impressive expansion course in the business year 2022/23 – especially in Southeast Europe and Switzerland. The number of hearing centres rose to 280. Furthermore, Neuroth now has around 1300 employees Europe-wide. The majority of these, around 890, work in the founding country Austria.

The expansion last year also significantly contributed to a very pleasing turnover increase: in the business year 2022/23, the Neuroth Group was able to achieve a group turnover of 167 million euros, an increase of 16 percent compared to the previous year (144 million euros in the business year 2021/22).



You can find further facts and figures on the next page in our:

## YELLOW FACTS

## NEUROTH SWITZERLAND: SUCCESSSES AND AWARDS

Switzerland plays an important part in the expansion strategy. Neuroth has been active in Switzerland for over 20 years and was able to increase the number of hearing centres from 68 to 85 in just a few months, thereby strengthening its role as the second-largest supplier in Switzerland. The award as the “best Swiss hearing system acoustician” by the Swiss Institute for Quality Tests (SIQT) further underlines the high service quality and consulting competence of Neuroth Switzerland.

## SOUTH-EAST EUROPE: POTENTIAL FOR THE FUTURE

Southeast Europe is gaining importance for Neuroth. We successfully entered the market in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the business year 2022/23 – with an increase to five branches to date. In Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, we have managed to double the number of Neuroth hearing centres over the past four years to 45 locations.

## HEARING PROTECTION AS A SECOND STRING TO OUR BOW

Alongside hearing aids, in the past year Neuroth also strengthened its second mainstay – hearing protection. The B2B turnover, especially for hearing protection for noisy workplaces, saw a significant increase. Major renowned companies, such as the Austrian building corporation “Porr”, equip their employees with Neuroth hearing protection. In addition, innovative products for leisure such as HUNT and SLEEP hearing protection were introduced or developed further, for hunting and a good night’s sleep respectively.

## HEARING POWER AS A CORPORATE PHILOSOPHY

The motto “From hearing weakness to Hearing Power” defines not only the expansion strategy but also the brand communication of Neuroth. This positive approach helps to break down the stigma of hearing impairment in society and to appeal to new customers. This is also confirmed by being awarded Gold at the “EFFIE Awards” in the last business year for the Hearing Power brand communication in the category “Positive Change”.

## THREE QUESTIONS FOR: NEUROTH CFO MICHAEL PAUL

### 1. HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WHEN YOU LOOK BACK ON THE BUSINESS YEAR?

Our business year 22/23 was particularly successful, with a turnover increase to 167 million euros. The positive development of the company overall also underlines the success of our expansion strategy. New branches were added, especially in Southeast Europe. We have also grown very rapidly in Switzerland, with many new branches – it is our second-largest market after Austria.

### 2. WHAT IS IMPORTANT WHEN CHOOSING A NEW LOCATION?

Before opening a new branch, it is important to know the potential in the respective country. In other words: how is the market developing? How many inhabitants and what local hearing aid supplies are there? All of these factors play a decisive role when determining a new location. In addition, it is important to us to make the best possible use of existing networks and to build on them, thereby spreading Hearing Power even further.

### 3. WHICH FURTHER EXPANSION STEPS ARE PLANNED?

We would like to continue down this path in future and to reinforce our mission of Hearing Power as an international vision. We can see potential for enabling better Hearing Power and a quality of life especially in Southeast Europe, where of around 50 million inhabitants, 2.5 million people have a hearing impairment. Austrian quality and tradition are particularly appreciated in these markets – Neuroth is contributing there to the further development of hearing acoustics and at the same time is becoming an attractive employer brand in the Southeast European region.





Hearing advice and services  
 Hearing aids and accessories  
 Hearing protection  
 Children's acoustics  
 Medical technology



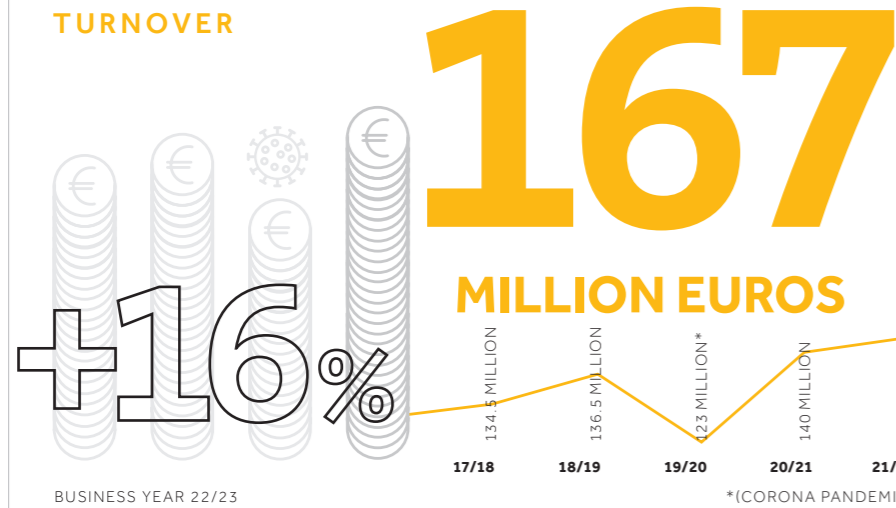
Trademarks offered by the Neuroth Group



Further companies of the Neuroth Group

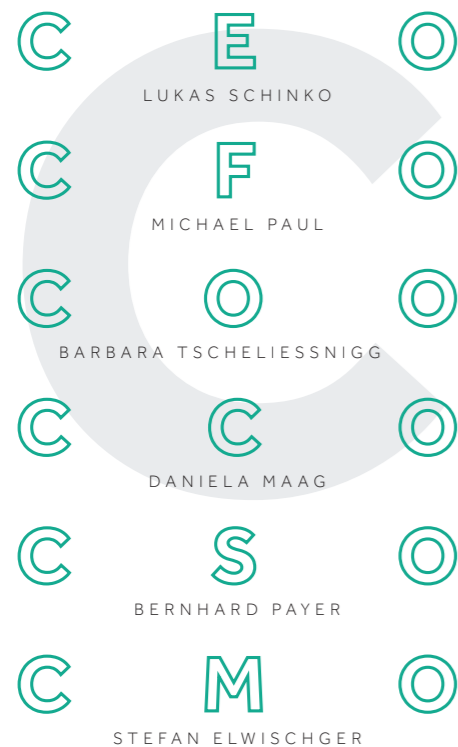


TURNOVER

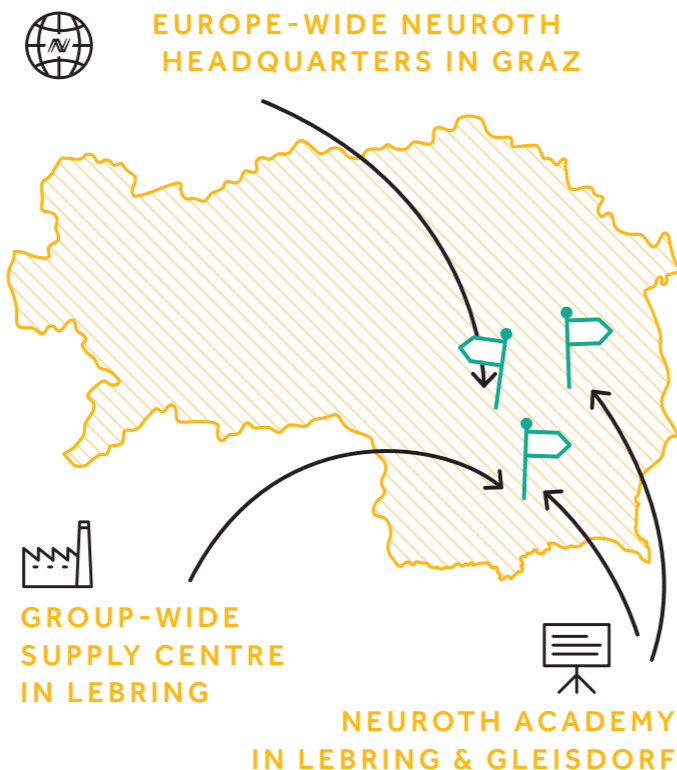


HIGH-QUALITY PRODUCTS + COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES = HEARING SOLUTIONS BY NEUROTH

C-LEVEL OF NEUROTH INTERNATIONAL AG



Our central locations:

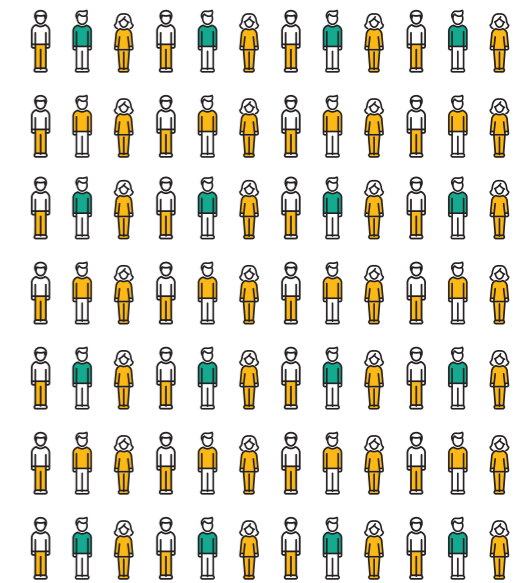
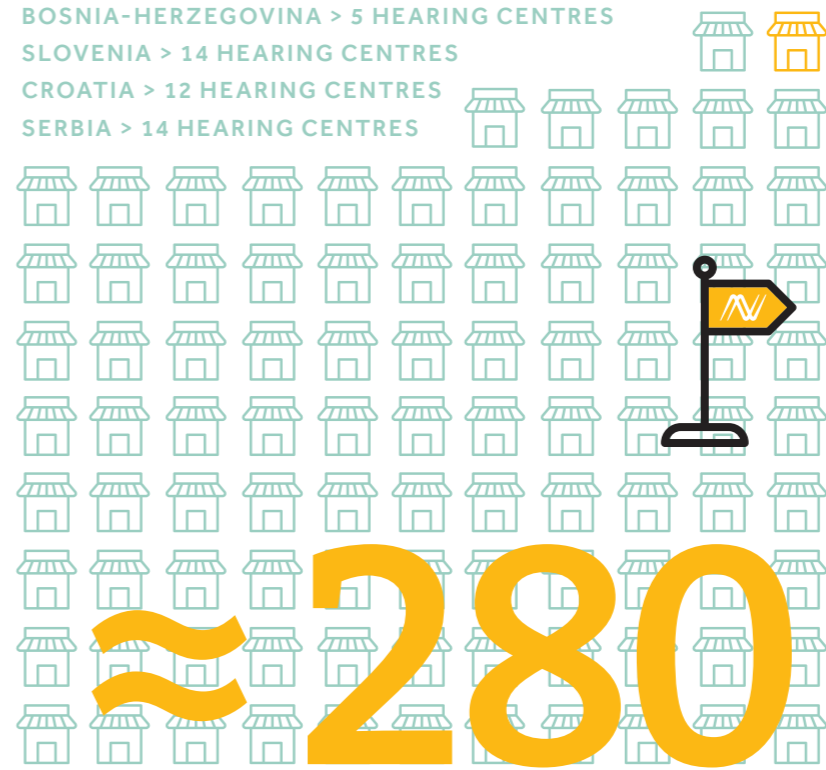


NATIONAL CENTRES IN ZUG (SWITZERLAND), MUNICH (GERMANY) AND BELGRADE (SERBIA)



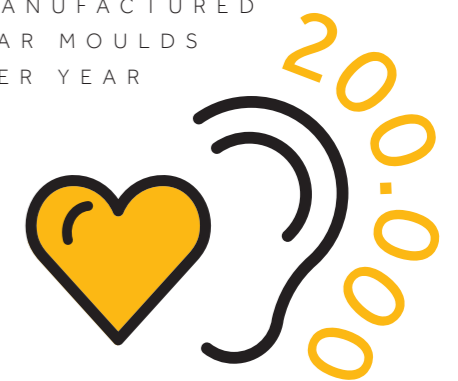
**8 COUNTRIES**  
 AUSTRIA, GERMANY, SWITZERLAND, LIECHTENSTEIN, SLOVENIA, CROATIA, SERBIA AND BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

- AUSTRIA > 140 HEARING CENTRES
- SWITZERLAND & LIECHTENSTEIN > 85 HEARING CENTRES
- GERMANY > 5 HEARING CENTRES
- BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA > 5 HEARING CENTRES
- SLOVENIA > 14 HEARING CENTRES
- CROATIA > 12 HEARING CENTRES
- SERBIA > 14 HEARING CENTRES



**1300**  
 Employees

MANUFACTURED EAR MOULDS PER YEAR



TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND

# It's me, your ear.

Hearing from a somewhat different perspective:  
an essay about a 24/7 “pretty complicated job”  
that demands special attentiveness.

BY MARLIES LUBI •

Hello. Do you know who I am? I've already been with you your whole life. My service started even before you were born. I'm your ear and there are two of us to support you. I'm often overshadowed by other sense organs, but now I would like to share my own perspective on the art of hearing. I not only master the complex interplay of anatomy and physiology but am also the gateway to the fascinating world of sound that is often overlooked. Of course nobody would want to do without me. But are you aware of everything I'm capable of?

First of all: I do a pretty complicated job. I'm quite rightly considered to be the most complex human sense organ. I consist of three main parts: the outer ear, the middle ear and the inner ear. By the way, this anatomy is also a reason why you people got us ears: it allows you to take in sound coming from the front – for example from someone you are talking to – particularly well. To the rear, the outer ear provides a better shield against interfering noise sources that are less welcome. But that is not its only function, it also plays a role in my main task of hearing.

This is because with your outer ear, whose shape varies individually from person to person, you absorb sound and bundle it before it is guided towards the eardrum through the auditory canal. From there, the incoming sound is amplified through the auditory canal chain – hammer, anvil and stirrup – and its lever function and is processed further in the inner ear. There the sound is converted into impulses that are suitable for the auditory centre in the brain. Because the sound waves cannot be processed in their original form. It is only in the inner ear that they are turned into coded, electrical signals. This occurs with the help of my sensory hair cells, of which I have no less than 20,000. It is only through the conversion into suitable signals that the auditory centre can process speech, music, basically everything beautiful that is audible.

## Hearing even before birth

I have already been doing this important job for a long time. As early as the 20th week of pregnancy, I am functional enough for the embryo to be able to process sound. This means that the part of me that enables this is fully developed before you are even born. This is because my aforementioned auditory canal chain remains the same size for a lifetime. It's therefore hardly surprising that these little hearing bones are the smallest bones in the human body. You will no longer recall this, but they allowed me to perceive sounds for you when you were still in the womb.

As if that were not tiring enough, I never take a break from my tasks, because I'm working for you 24 hours a day. Even while you are peacefully asleep, I am on call, in standby mode so to speak, in order to perceive important stimuli. This is a defence mechanism determined by evolution, to protect you against possible

enemies and dangers. Although I recover at night, I am always fully functional.

I'm happy to do all of this. After all, I'm yours. My partner on the other side feels the same. However, we are grateful when you take care of us in return. You should therefore avoid listening to very loud music for too long, for example. And if we ever do require a bit of help, you can always go with us to hearing acoustics experts and ENT doctors who are very well-informed about our needs. Then we will be there for you again with full Hearing Power.



The fascination of hearing:  
sound makes its way into the  
inner ear via the outer ear.



# True or false?

Andreas Grill has already been a hearing acoustician at Neuroth for 30 years and is therefore a longstanding ear enthusiast and expert in its needs. There have been many myths surrounding our hearing for at least as long. Which is why we are now presenting an ear edition of: True or false?



## “Hearing impairment only affects older people.”

False!

False! Although it is true that with advancing age the ears are subject to a degree of wear and tear and therefore at the age of around 60 one notices the first deterioration in hearing ability, it can also affect younger people. Sudden deafness, which one can picture as a heart attack in the ear due to a lack of circulation in the inner ear, often happens to younger people. Age-related hearing loss can gradually set in from the age of 40. Another case is impaired hearing already being present among newborns. This is why, around 40 years ago, Neuroth called for hearing screening to be carried out in Austrian hospitals on the second day after birth. This allows a quick response if a baby has hearing loss, which subsequently enables the learning of speech.

## “Cotton buds damage the ears.”

True!

Cleaning the ears with a cotton bud is a bad habit. Furthermore, it does not correspond to the purpose for which the product was originally developed. The buds were actually intended for cosmetics, but consumers used them incorrectly, which led to unexpected success for the developing company. However, this is more than just a surprising error, because cotton buds can be dangerous when used in such a manner. Incidents occur regularly where people inadvertently injure their eardrum with them. Furthermore, it is not necessary at all to clean the inner ear area, because the so-called cerumen is produced as protection against germs and excretes of its own accord. When cleaning with a cotton bud, on the other hand, it is just pushed further in.

## “No water should get into the ears.”

If one constantly had water in the ear it could cause auditory canal inflammations. But water is not a threat to our ears in principle, because they are anatomically structured so that the auditory canal runs downwards and water comes out again by itself.

False!



Hearing acoustics master Andreas Grill



# MY HEARING POWER MY STORY

Father and daughter and a young professor tell their very personal stories about to what extent hearing aids have a positive influence on their lives.



# Father and daughter share the wow experience.

Thomas and Hanna Strobl are father and daughter. Both of them have impaired hearing. How hearing aids have made a positive change to the everyday lives of the independent dental technician and the young student and how openly they deal with it.

BY JONAS LANGREITER •

At Thomas Strobl's workshop, a 49-year-old independent dental technician, and in the lively everyday life of his daughter Hanna, a dedicated student of the subjects German, history and sport, hearing plays a central role. Both are part of a family that is bound not only by shared interests but also by a particular challenge: hearing impairment.

Thomas Strobl became aware of his hearing loss around seven years ago, thanks to his wife's nagging, who noticed that he often had to ask others to repeat what they had said. "After attending a second appointment with Hanna at the hearing acoustician, it was nothing new for me anymore. I knew it was high time to do something about it," the dental technician recalls. Age-related hearing difficulties finally brought him to Neuroth, where he realised that a hearing aid was not only a necessity but could also mean an improvement in his quality of life.

For the young student Hanna Strobl, who realised during the silence of the corona pandemic and the masked faces of her teachers that her hearing was declining, the diagnosis of hearing impairment was initially a shock. "So I wasn't just imagining it," says the young woman, who was used to lipreading and interpreting within the context. She had to face up to the reality of genetically determined hearing loss – a fact that presented not only academic but also personal challenges.

## Hearing aids as a turning point

The decision to consult Neuroth was a turning point for both of them. The father and daughter describe their first encounter with their hearing aids as a revelation – sounds and voices that were previously concealed in the fog of inaudibility were suddenly clear and distinct. "It was like a real wow experience," is how Thomas Strobl describes it. His daughter, on the other hand, emphasises the adjustment phase and the ability to participate fully once again in academic life: "You definitely notice that the hearing aids make a big difference."

In his work as a dental technician and in her university environment, both of them are experiencing the advantages that the modern hearing aid technology

# 538,800

From hearing consultations and hearing tests to adjustment and service appointments – our customers attended over 538,800 appointments in the last business year.

# A WORLD FULL OF SOUND

has to offer. The 49-year-old emphasises how his improved hearing ability enables him to communicate more effectively with his team and to carry out detailed work with greater precision. Hanna Strobl, who has to deal with everyday campus life and sports activities, appreciates the flexibility and the specific functions of her hearing aids, which help her to hear optimally in every situation.

The choice of hearing acoustician proved to be decisive for their positive experience. Through individual advice, adjustment and the possibility to try out different devices, they found not only a hearing aid but also a solution that meets their individual needs. "I found it all very straightforward," says Thomas Strobl about the service at Neuroth. "They also explain how the system works exactly and how the ear works in general."

“Our hearing aids have vastly improved our quality of life!”

## The gateway to a world full of sound

The openness with which the father and daughter accept and wear their hearing aids is in contrast to various prejudices that are often associated with hearing aids. For the two of them, they are not only a technical aid but an integral part of their life, a gateway to a world full of sound and opportunities. Their hearing aids allow Thomas and Hanna Strobl to practice their professions,

to pursue academic goals and to forge a deep connection with their surroundings and the people around them.

Their stories are an inspiring testimony to the courage to accept challenges and to make the most of the opportunities that modern hearing technology has to offer. "Don't wait – go and sort it out immediately!" Thomas Strobl's advises all those confronted with compromised hearing to go and see a hearing expert. "My quality of life has improved enormously thanks to this!" Due to the hearing aids, they have not only got their hearing back but also a quality of life that is priceless.



# Audibly strong: Katharina Maitz tells us about her life with hearing aids.

Our everyday life is filled with sounds: whether it is music in earphones or the ringing of an alarm clock, for most people hearing is part of their everyday life just like brushing their teeth. But not for everyone. Katharina Maitz tells her hearing aid story – in everyday life and in her job as a professor.

BY CAROLIN LUTTINGER •

It is estimated that around every fifth person has poor hearing. About a third of these have serious difficulties in following conversations. Katharina Maitz, a Neuroth customer for about a year now, is one of them. The professor works at the Private Pedagogical University Augustinum in Graz. When she is not busy at work, the young woman can be found outdoors on a walk in nature or trying out recipes in the kitchen. In addition, she volunteers for a social organisation in her free time. Katharina Maitz is also living with a hearing deficiency and has done since she was a young adult.

## University, job and relocation

Later on, when Katharina Maitz was planning to go into university teaching, it was clear to her that she could not teach like that, so she made sure that she got hearing aids before her first lecture. She then wore the first hearing aids for a little over six years. When she relocated, Katharina Maitz switched acousticians and came to Neuroth. When asked whether the adjustment phase took long, the young woman laughs: "It needn't have taken long, but I was so curious. I wanted to try out different models." And that is just what she did. The professor describes the process as very interesting, because hearing aids sound different depending on the model. After she had tried out enough of them, it all went quickly, with only the volume needing to be adjusted.

“The adjustment phase needn't have taken so long, but I was so curious. I wanted to try out different hearing aid models.

# AGAINST THE STIGMA OF HEARING AIDS.

Now the settings are just right and Katharina Maitz can teach without any problems. Although she is aware that hearing aids are no substitute for natural hearing and in some situations she still experiences some difficulty, she is "coping really well." The hearing aids don't bother her anymore either: "When I start a new teaching course and everyone is talking at once, I may have to ask people to repeat what they said. Then I simply tell them that I wear hearing aids."

## Many possible causes of hearing loss

"My ears are definitely my weak spot. As a child they were always 'in trouble'." Already at a young age, Katharina Maitz often had sinusitis. This can be triggered by viral and bacterial infections or fungi, for example when swimming. Because the sinuses and the ears are connected by a narrow canal, the Eustachian tube, it can affect the ears – which was the case for Katharina Maitz. It is no trade secret that sinusitis can lead to long-term hearing problems, but it is still relatively unknown among the wider public.

In Katharina Maitz's case, it is uncertain as to whether infections were in fact the culprit of her hearing loss. Genetics are a further factor, because hearing impairment is no rarity within her family: "My grandmother became severely hard of hearing relatively early on and it was the same for my mother. An aunt and an uncle are also hard of hearing. There could be a genetic factor somewhere."

## The stigma of hearing aids

Katharina Maitz was barely 20 when hearing became noticeably more difficult for her. After a few visits to the doctor, it soon became evident that the young adult was suffering from a hearing impairment.

However, years went by between the initial visits to the doctor and the appointment with an acoustician. Katharina Maitz is no exception in this respect. Many people have prejudices towards hearing aids, especially at a young age. "I was indeed concerned about things like: everybody will see them! What will people think? Especially at my age – I was in my late twenties – I didn't really want to wear hearing aids, which tend to be associated with older people." However, in the same breath the young woman goes on to say that these concerns turned out to be unfounded. Hardly anyone noticed that she was wearing hearing aids. She herself though has developed a certain awareness in the meantime.

# 25%

Only around 25 percent of all people with hearing impairments are equipped with hearing aids.

Many of those affected struggle with the visibility and stigma surrounding hearing aids. For example, only around a quarter of all people with a hearing impairment actually wear hearing aids. Katharina Maitz has a critical view of the shame associated with it and wonders why it initially bothered her to wear hearing aids, while her glasses are even considered as an accessory. That ought to change.



# ...And what does hearing mean to you?

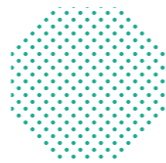
BY CELINA ERJAUTZ •

**Every person perceives sounds in different ways. Everyone has a different concept of good hearing and some take it so much for granted that they don't pay any attention to it. "yEARly" went out and about, listening to what people have to say on the matter.**

"Hearing is very relevant for me, too. I am a musician – of course it is important to me how I hear. Although I have a very trained musical ear, I have reduced hearing in my right ear. It's not always easy to follow a conversation or music if my right ear is turned in the direction of the sound. My hearing is muffled on that side, as if I

had cotton wool in my ear. I often have to turn my head to the side a little to understand everything clearly. I've learnt to appreciate that I can hear so well despite this. I can enjoy music and have conversations with my loved ones.

To protect my hearing even so, I take a hearing protection system with me to concerts or noisy events. I love hearing and I want to preserve my ability to do so for as long as possible!"



## Atha Ishak (21)

"I've never really thought about what hearing means for me, but it's part of my life like bread and butter. I can't imagine not being able to hear. I listen to music every day and it helps me to calm down or brighten my mood. I also like to attend concerts. In the past I've often wished I had hearing protection with me – I will definitely ensure that I do in future. It is important to protect your ears even at a young age. Hopefully I will then still be able to hear concerts and all the wonderful sounds of this world for a long time to come!"

## Thomas Digruber (35)

"Hearing is beautiful. I've learnt through having my children that it is an indescribable feeling to catch all their verbal utterances. From the first babbling as a baby to their first word and the first more meaningful conversations. It's a process that every person goes through and to be part of it as a parent is simply a gift. Listening to others is also especially important in my everyday life. I work in healthcare – I have to listen to my patients to be able to help them, even if it's not that easy sometimes. I can therefore say that I'm very glad to be able to hear."



"Hearing does not have just one meaning for me. First of all, it means experiencing my surroundings. I can talk to friends, hear the birds in spring and trudging through snow in winter. But hearing also means switching off for me. Earphones on, music on, world off. I can immerse myself in the world of music and have time to myself.

To me, hearing also means being aware of other people's emotions. Whether it's a trembling voice, cheerful chatter, shouting or a contrite tone. It allows me to make out what others are feeling and to help them if necessary.

I also need my hearing to practice my job and my hobby. I'm a paramedic, which means that I speak to people in emergency situations. They need help – my help. By listening, I know how best to proceed."

Emma Kaluscha (20)

# 130,300

*A hearing test is the first step towards better hearing. Over 130,300 hearing tests were carried out by Neuroth acousticians in the year 2022/23.*



"Hearing is very important to me. Communication is an essential part of my life – my ability to hear helps me to communicate well. The fact that I can hear and communicate contributes to my great quality of life."

Wolfgang Erjautz (64)

It is evident from all these answers that the ability to hear is relevant for all age groups. Whether it is the little nostalgic sounds of the seasons, immersion in the magical world of music or the importance of our ability to hear at work or in our everyday communication. A person's ability to hear is a huge factor when it comes to quality of life. Neuroth's goal is therefore to offer people the possibility to experience life with all its facets.



# Hearing Power for young customers.

What Neuroth does to promote hearing among children and young people, together with trained paediatric audiologists.

BY SARAH SCHOBER •



Since 2005, Neuroth has been delighting young customers and their parents with playful appointments at the children's audiology branch in Vienna. The paediatric audiologist Heidi Neuroth and the customer Elisabeth W. tell us about their personal experiences.

The birth of a child is a unique experience full of happiness for many families. However, when the first hearing screening for newborns establishes that the child's ability to hear is not adequately developed, it can be difficult for parents to comprehend at first. For Elisabeth W. it was not easy to accept either in the beginning that her daughter Lucia needed a hearing aid when she was just one year old. After the newborn hearing screening for Lucia at the hospital that did not lead to a conclusive result for either ear, she was referred to the hospital by her paediatrician. Her family insisted on a second opinion in order to ensure the best possible care for Lucia. According to her speech therapist at the time, Lucia's right ear at least had an adequate hearing ability to be able to support regular language development. Elisabeth W. recalls that Lucia responded well to everyday stimuli and could therefore not be conclusively termed as hard of hearing.

#### Every beginning is difficult

As part of the one-year postnatal passport examination, Lucia's paediatrician referred her again until a medium inner ear hearing difficulty was established. For Lucia, this meant that from now on she would need hearing aids.

*"The diagnosis is of course a shock. It's as if the rug were being pulled out from under one's feet."*

This was a shock for Lucia's mother Elisabeth W.. The mother of her cousin, who was hard of hearing and who she grew up with, then recommended that she seek out the Neuroth children's audiology department with Lucia at Meidlinger Hauptstrasse in Vienna. "Sometimes there are appointments where the children play in the kid's corner while we just console

the family and tears flow. That's part and parcel of it. When they have learnt to accept it and can see that the children can simply handle everyday life better with hearing aids, parents come out of the initial spiral of grief," the paediatric audiology expert Heidi Neuroth recounts, who has been taking care of the W. family from the beginning. She has been directing paediatric acoustics in Vienna since 2005. Before that, she worked as a primary school teacher. With the aim of heading up children's audiology, she decided to complete the Master examination as a hearing aid acoustician in addition. "Children's audiology is something very special, which is why I commuted to Innsbruck for the paediatric audiology course," Heidi Neuroth recounts.



Heidi Neuroth

When working with children, it is important to her to make the appointments as playful as possible, so that the visit to the Neuroth children's audiology department is pleasant for both the young patients and their parents.



#### An appointment with the snowflake

Particularly when it comes to infants and toddlers, testing the ears can prove to be difficult. For this reason, the children's audiology department takes a playful approach to children from the beginning: "If the children are terribly afraid during their first visit, it wrecks things for the future," Heidi Neuroth explains. Even though Lucia was still really small at her first appointments, Elisabeth W. does not recall any audiometry that was a problem for the little one: "There was a bench in the waiting room with games and books stashed under it. We felt really well taken care of there." To be able to make an ear cast for hearing aids, first a tamponade and then an ear cast mass have to be squirted into the ear until it has hardened a little. The youngest clientele at Neuroth calls this "ear pudding".

First of all, the otoscope is introduced, so that the children will not be afraid of it. When looking into the ear afterwards, the story of the snowflake starts – the tamponade. When it shrinks it starts to scrunch, like fresh snow in winter. When the snowflake has been fitted correctly in the auditory canal, it suddenly gets hungry and shouts out for pudding. Then the ear cast mass is squirted into the ear and that was it. Heidi Neuroth is of the opinion:

*"Children should have fun, so that they don't even notice that we're doing our job in the meantime."*

#### Colourful hearing solutions

To make wearing hearing aids more appealing and pleasant for children, almost all the parts of the device are available in different colours. Lucia finds typical black or grey hearing aids boring. She'd rather have something more colourful: at the moment, her right hearing aid is pink. For the left one, she likes to wear shades of purple and blue at the moment. The fact that the colours and the sides start with the same letters in German helps her not to mix the devices up. Elisabeth W. laughs: "It's a

fashion show every time until we know in which colours to make the new hearing aids!"

#### Future visions that make (audible) sense

A lot has changed since Lucia was hiding her hearing aids as a young child so as not to have to wear them. She has grown up with and at Neuroth and always wears her hearing aids – except when sleeping and swimming. The now 15-year-old attends the Viennese Federal Institute for the Deaf, where in addition she is learning sign language with her fellow pupils. In her free time, she likes playing tennis and taking care of the family garden. "She digs around in my garden and plants all kinds of things: peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers and so on," says Elisabeth W., "We then usually have so many plants that we give them away." This has also given rise to Lucia's wish to do something with plants later, for example as a gardener or florist.

As a rule, the young hearing aid customers are then referred between the age of 14 and 15 to the nearest adult hearing centre, where they are given further care. For the paediatric audiology expert Heidi Neuroth, it is nice to watch children like Lucia grow up: "For others, it's just a profession. For me, it's simply a joy to help families and to see the children happy." It is also important, in her opinion, to provide children with the best possible support at all stages in life, because they are our future. "Children are such a valuable asset and we must all take care of them together. We must make their path through life as easy as possible. It's a great pleasure to help them along their way a little."

# 3/1000

**Approximately up to 3 out of 1000 children have hearing loss. The newborn hearing screening improves the chance of identifying it early on.**



*"Children are such a valuable asset and we must all take care of them together. We must make their path through life as easy as possible. It's a great pleasure to help them along their way a little."*

Heidi Neuroth



# NEW HEARING TEST APP:

## Soundcheck at home.

In a world full of sounds, hearing is a capability that is often only appreciated when it deteriorates. How a hearing impairment becomes noticeable and how the Neuroth hearing test app can help with this are revealed by the hearing acoustician Hansueli Müller, a Neuroth Area Manager in Switzerland.



BY FELIX ERNST •

Hearing impairment has a wide variety of causes. Diseases such as otosclerosis, when parts of the ear ossify, or injuries to the ear can lead to a loss of hearing. The two most common causes of hearing impairments, however, are advancing age or excessive exposure to noise. From a purely scientific point of view, Hansueli Müller points out, a slight hearing impairment starts from 20 decibels of average hearing loss. "However, there may also be a hearing impairment if one has difficulty in understanding people in everyday life. There are no exact measurements, it is a subjective perception," says the hearing acoustician.

### Hearing the twittering of birds

At what point should one carry out a hearing test? According to Müller, that's the crunch question, because people notice a hearing impairment at different stages. Some people react very quickly themselves to a loss of hearing ability, while others are only made aware of their hearing impairment by those around them. In principle, the Swiss hearing acoustician recommends regular hearing tests with specialists from the age of 30. "If you can no longer hear the twittering of birds, it is a big indication of a hearing impairment, because there are birds everywhere," according to Müller.

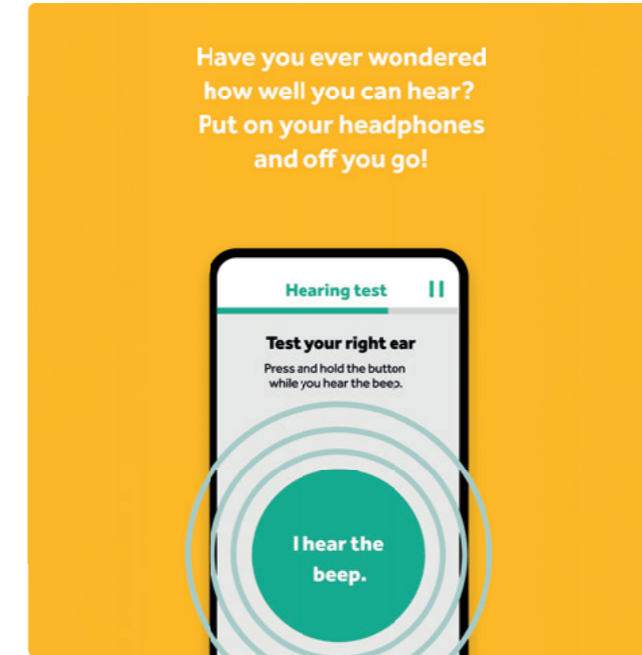
### Heading towards a digital future with the hearing test app

The Neuroth hearing test app has been available since mid-June 2023. So everybody has a hearing test in their pocket. Hansueli Müller highlights this simple availability of the hearing test app. As a hearing impairment is tainted with shame still now, the hearing test app offers a good alternative for carrying out an initial hearing measurement. To do so, one only needs a smartphone with functioning earphones.

However, the Neuroth hearing test app is not a substitute for a professional hearing test with a hearing acoustician. "With the app there are certain

# 60%

A hearing impairment was ascertained among around 60% of the app users.

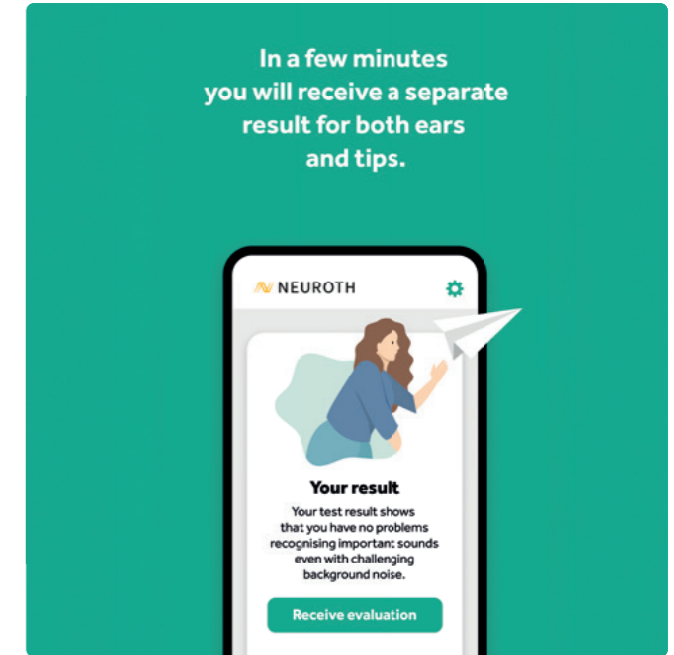


variables. On the one hand, this may be due to users not carrying out the test quite correctly. On the other hand, the test result also depends on the end device, as well as its technical specifications and the measurement circumstances," Müller states. During a hearing test at the hearing centre, these variables are eliminated and you are given advice by trained hearing acousticians, Hansueli Müller emphasises.

However, he goes on to say that the new app is a good means of raising awareness of hearing deficiencies, breaking down initial barriers and lowering the threshold for visiting a specialist. In addition, the easy availability allows one to motivate others to test their own hearing ability.

## The hearing test app for personal use

In order to test the functionality of the Neuroth hearing test app, I must first be in a quiet place. After I have downloaded and opened the app and connected my earphones to the smartphone, I can start the test. The app gives me clear instructions that are easy to follow and after a brief practice run, the actual hearing test begins. The left and the right ear are tested separately to obtain a result that is as detailed as possible. Different sounds are played and I'm asked to click a button if I can hear them. The test only takes about five minutes and I get the result directly on the app. I am sent an e-mail shortly afterwards with additional information and a separate result for each



# 47%

47% of users are under 50 years old – this means that an important goal of the app, namely for young people to also be concerned about their hearing, has been achieved.

The hearing test app is available to download here:



ear. I'm delighted with the great result, both ears are classified as level 0 on the WHO scale, which means that I have no hearing loss.

**Conclusion:** The advantage of the app is definitely its availability on a smartphone and therefore easy accessibility. The test does not take long there and the result is available immediately. By carrying it out regularly, you can monitor your ongoing hearing ability. If there is ever anything unusual or you want to err on the side of caution, you can immediately make an appointment for a personal consultation at Neuroth.



# Insight into the technology of hearing aids.

BY AMELIE SCHENK •



*The world of hearing is multifaceted. But for many people, access to this acoustic world is less than straightforward. Around 1.6 billion people worldwide have deficient hearing. The hearing acoustics expert Christian Pelzmann reveals how a hearing aid can help with this and how it works.*

If you ask people about their notions of how a hearing aid works, you get a wide range of answers – from creative assumptions to genuine interest in the technology that supports the ability to hear. Some of those questioned assume that hearing aids are little loudspeakers, while others have the idea that they directly simulate the small bones of the ear. There is evident curiosity. The hearing acoustics expert Christian Pelzmann provides information that allows deeper immersion into the complexity of the subject. “Hearing aids serve the purpose of amplifying sound waves and converting them into sounds that are audible for people,” Christian Pelzmann explains. The process starts with the microphone in the hearing aid that absorbs sound waves and then converts them into electrical signals. These signals are processed by an amplifier to ensure that they correspond to the individual hearing requirements.

*“Hearing aids serve the purpose of amplifying sound waves and converting them into audible sounds.”*

Christian Pelzmann points out that the centrepiece of the hearing aid is the tiny computer chip. It has the task of processing and adjusting the sound signals. The chip takes different frequencies and sound levels into account to ensure an optimal hearing experience. The modified signals are then emitted through the loudspeaker in the hearing aid into the auditory canal, where they are absorbed by the inner ear and converted into electrical impulses. These impulses reach the auditory nerve and are then perceived by the brain as sounds.

#### **A masterpiece of hearing technology**

Hearing aids may appear unassuming at first glance, but their inner structure is a complex interplay of technology and precision. “This is because due to the size of the hearing aids, it is not at all easy to put them together,” Pelzmann reveals. A typical hearing aid consists of several components including the microphone, the amplifier, the processor and the loudspeaker. These components work together harmoniously to create an individual and optimal hearing experience.

“The microphone absorbs sound waves from the environment, while the amplifier ensures that the signals are passed on at the right volume. The processor plays a decisive role in the adjustment of the sound signals to the specific hearing requirements of the user. Finally, the loudspeaker emits the processed signals into the auditory canal, where they find their way to the auditory nerve,” says Pelzmann.

*“In the world of hearing technology, each hearing aid is an individually customised masterpiece that is tailored to all possible requirements of the wearer.”*

#### **Customised hearing: inconspicuous sound experiences**

In-the-ear hearing aids are characterised in particular by a compact structure. They are small and inconspicuous, also thanks to their typical skin-coloured design. All the electronics are in the ear mould. The placement of the hearing aids directly in the auditory canal allows almost natural sound absorption.

Due to the individual fitting in the auditory canal, they are particularly pleasant to wear and are generally suitable for minor to medium hearing impairments. The exact shape of the auditory canal and the degree of hearing loss influence the choice of suitable ear mould.

#### **Small format, big performance**

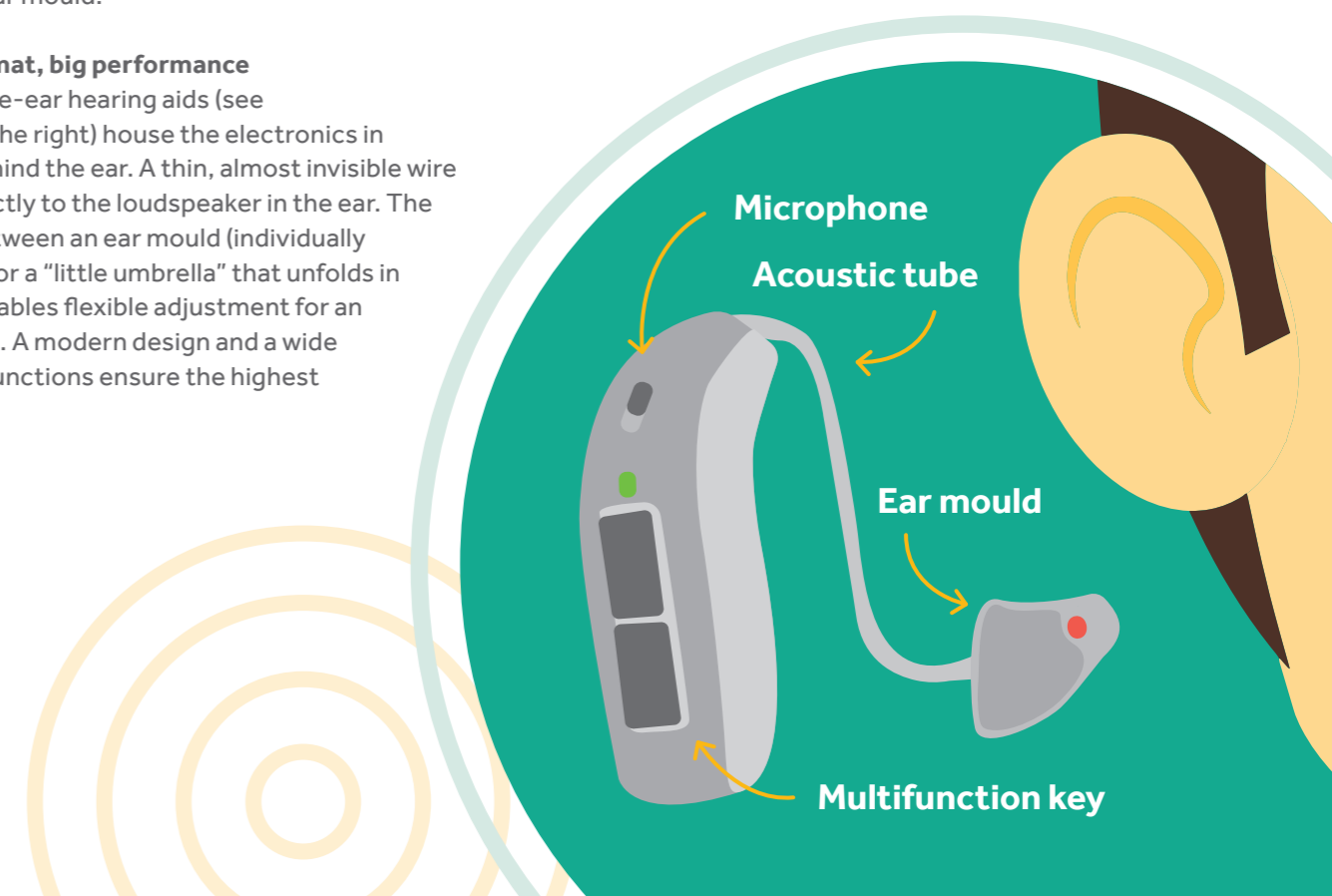
Behind-the-ear hearing aids (see figure on the right) house the electronics in casing behind the ear. A thin, almost invisible wire leads directly to the loudspeaker in the ear. The choice between an ear mould (individually adjusted) or a “little umbrella” that unfolds in the ear enables flexible adjustment for an optimal fit. A modern design and a wide range of functions ensure the highest

hearing comfort, for example through the Bluetooth connection with the smartphone and TV. Behind-the-ear hearing aids are available in a variety of colours and can either be matched discreetly to the hair colour or worn in bold colours. The rechargeable battery technology is also advancing and is increasingly taking over from battery-operated hearing aids.

Thanks to such innovations, the world of hearing is becoming vibrant again for many people and their quality of life is being decisively improved. Hearing aids are therefore becoming essential companions for people with hearing loss.

# 30%

*The ratio of hearing aids with rechargeable batteries compared to those that are battery-operated is continuously increasing: in the business year 22/23 it was 30 percent.*



# The hearing aid as a lifestyle object.

BY DANIEL GHANIMI •



In the more than 115 years since the foundation of Neuroth, hearing systems have developed into truly high-tech devices that can be adapted to every life situation. Hearing aids can also be fashionable and eye-catching. This is shown, for example, by the Viennatone and Eora brands.

115

## VIENNATONE

Calling traditional hearing aids to mind conjures up stereotypical images for many people – of the users as well as of the devices themselves. The stigma is (still) reality, as is “smart hearing” – representing the many functions that the hearing solutions now bring together. These range from wireless networking and the design to AI-supported features.

**New exclusive trademark with an upgrade function**  
With Viennatone as the first exclusive trademark, Neuroth has created a new offer for smart hearing especially for active and digitally savvy customers. It represents a Bluetooth-enabled, rechargeable battery hearing solution in various colours and sizes with three possible

upgrade levels (“Premium”, “Pro” or “Max”), which can be activated quickly and easily as required by hearing acousticians. With a young modern brand presence and the possibility to upgrade one’s hearing solution according to requirements, Neuroth is taking a further step from a traditional hearing aid to a smart lifestyle object.

### Individuality and flexibility

The aim with Viennatone is to empower young people and those who are young at heart to perceive their hearing solution not as a burden but as an enrichment and a lifestyle accessory.



# 38%

Neuroth customers are becoming increasingly digital: more and more of them book their appointments directly through the Neuroth website – in the year 2023 the number of online bookings rose by around 38 percent in Austria alone.



“Viennatone stands for self-confidence, individuality and especially flexibility. The special feature is that the new hearing solution can easily be extended with functions and is therefore developing further in accordance with customer requirements,” Michael Aldrian, the Project Manager of Viennatone, explains. In 2023, the new trademark was diligently finetuned in the background and since 16 January 2024 Viennatone has been available at every Neuroth shop in the DACH countries. “Sales have been going well so far. In particular, we are looking to go beyond Germany, Austria and Switzerland and make this new smart hearing solution available to even more people,” according to Michael Aldrian.

#### The upgrade steps

“With Viennatone, the name of the game is a modern design, rechargeable battery technology and connectivity – it goes without saying that the devices can be connected to a smartphone,” Michael Aldrian adds. “The innovative and modern hearing solution is rounded off by the Viennatone upgrades: The first

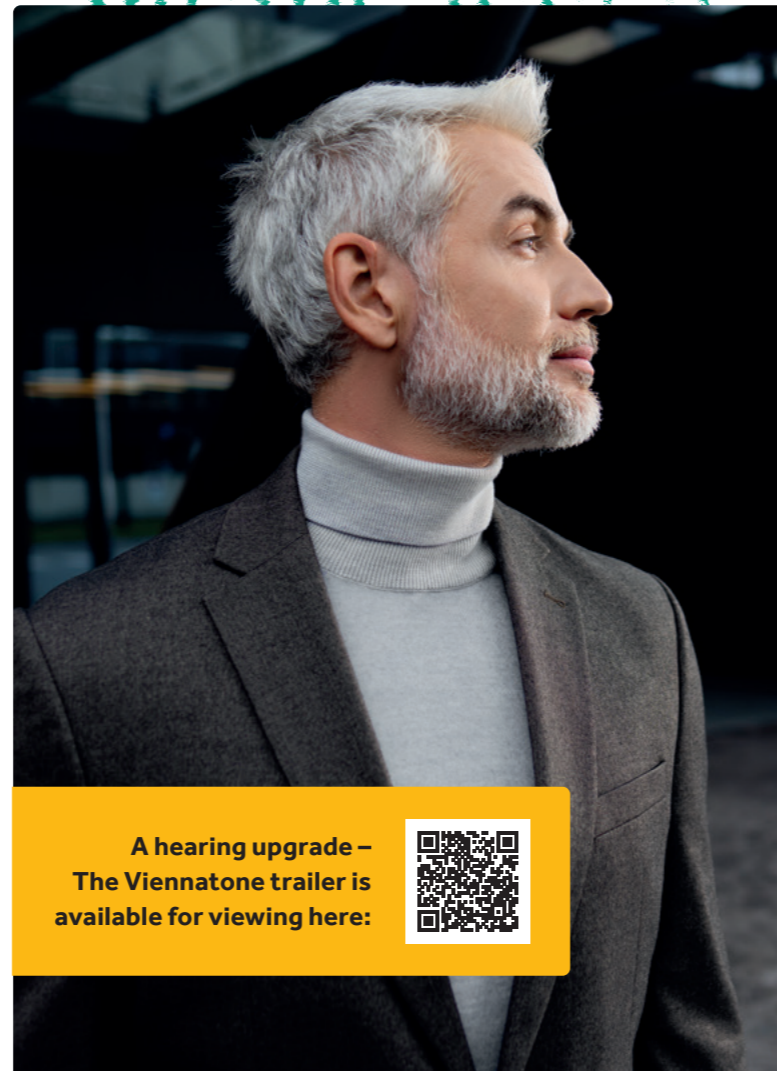
upgrade offers improved noise suppression. It is therefore possible to understand conversations in quiet surroundings – optimally suited to effortless conversations for two when dining at home or with one’s training partner at the gym.”

The next step, Upgrade Pro, is ideal for all musicians and concert fans, according to the Viennatone Project Manager. “Special microphone settings balance poor room acoustics. Your favourite music therefore sounds even better, whether at home or at a concert hall, whether in the audience or on the stage.” For all those who like to be out and about in nature, the third level offers a high degree of comfort in complex hearing situations: “Thanks to automatic echo suppression, including ideal impulse noise and wind noise suppression, the Upgrade Max achieves the optimal outdoor experience,” says Michael Aldrian. Because: What would hiking tours be without the twittering of birds or the soothing rushing of streams and waterfalls?

# 1.

“With Viennatone we are setting a loud exclamation mark – not only in the hearing acoustics sector. It is our first exclusive own brand that we at Neuroth have launched on the market and therefore it is also a new milestone in our company history. We are very proud of the successful launch!”

CEO Lukas Schinko



A hearing upgrade –  
The Viennatone trailer is  
available for viewing here:



## eora



#### Hearing jewellery: A hearing aid as a fashionable accessory

Alongside Viennatone, Eora is another powerful statement on the journey from a hearing aid to a lifestyle object. The aim of the hearing jewels brand that was developed together with Neuroth is to break down the stigma surrounding hearing aids, which often keeps people from seeking advice. Just as glasses are designed by designers nowadays and have conquered the catwalk, Eora offers the first hearing jewellery worldwide. The focus is not only on the technology but also on the questions of which hearing jewel suits one’s personal style and is best for expressing oneself individually. Eora therefore combines user-friendly technology with fashionable and at the same time light, robust and varied jewellery. The Eora collection currently comprises the Jazz, free Jazz, Beat and New Beat designs, including matching necklaces, bracelets and rings in a stylish precious metal jewellery look.

#### How the hearing jewellery works

The functional Eora ear studs consist of several components: the internal technology for natural hearing that is individually adjusted by authorised hearing acousticians, the ear mould (dome) and the ear jewellery itself, which can be changed according to one’s mood and the occasion. The studs are not worn behind the ear but on the earlobe as ear studs, so there are no problems with so-called hair rustling. Nowadays, hearing jewellery offers the possibility to improve individual hearing abilities while feeling stylish, beyond all age or gender-specific boundaries.





# Colourful variety in the ears.

BY MATTHIAS ADLER •

*Toby Romeo is a young 23 years of age and a DJ. The Austrian discovered his passion for music at a young age and already performed at the Donauinselfest in Vienna at the age of just 13. He reveals in a discussion why hearing protection goes without saying for him at concerts.*

For some people music is an audible richness of colour, for others music is where the soul starts to breathe. For many people, music is a constant companion. It helps in sad moments, helps concentration when studying and sends masses into ecstasy on animated nights at clubs. For most people it is unthinkable to lose these moments through hearing loss. For one 23-year-old, however, there is much more at stake: For the internationally successful DJ and music producer Toby Romeo, music is an essential part of his life. The Austrian grew up in a musical family and learnt to play the e-guitar and the piano at a young age. He was inspired by the performance of a DJ in his hometown and wanted to inspire others as a DJ himself. At the age of just 13, he won several DJ contests and performed at the Donauinselfest in Vienna in front of around 300,000 spectators. Toby Romeo achieved great renown through cooperation with Felix Jaehn, by producing remixes for the German DJ. His fans have heard him deejaying at many international festivals over the course of his career.



# 120 dB

*At concerts, the volume can reach peak values of 120 decibels, which is defined in general as the pain threshold.*

## Protecting one's ears at concerts

So as not to compromise the special sound quality at festivals, concerts and live music, despite the volume, Neuroth offers individually adjusted hearing protection with the EARWEAR brand. At concerts, the volume can reach peak values of 120 decibels, which in general is defined as the pain threshold. This noise exposure can damage our hearing permanently after just a short time. With different linear filters, the quality of sound at music events remains unchanged but one's hearing is not exposed to the full volume.

Apart from optimal wearing comfort, the perfect filter effect (insulation) is also important for hearing protection. Of course, a musician has different requirements from a workman. Toby Romeo is delighted with the insulation: "Many of my colleagues are concerned that the atmosphere at a performance is negatively influenced by hearing protection. But due to a suitable filter, the music is curbed in such a linear manner that I am perfectly aware of the energy of my crowd, as well as of my music."

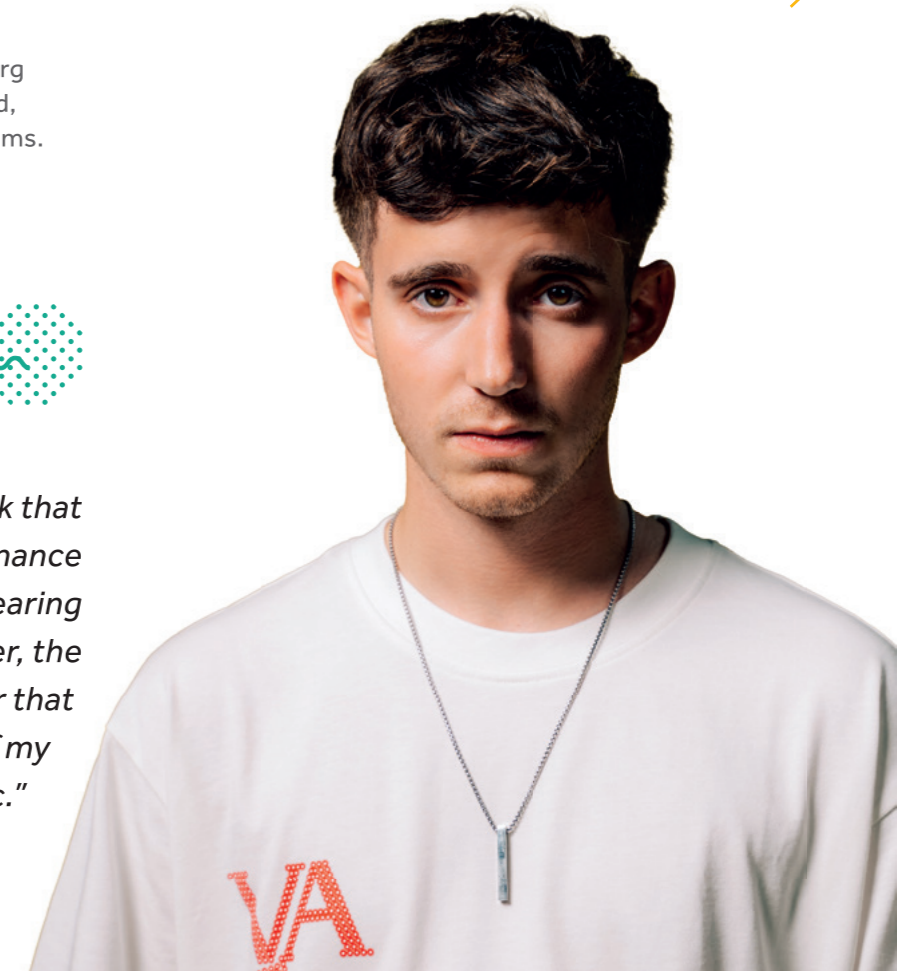
However, what is most important for the Salzburg local is that the sound is not muffled or distorted, as is the case for other hearing protection systems.



*"Many of my colleagues think that the atmosphere at a performance is negatively influenced by hearing protection. But due to a suitable filter, the music is curbed in such a linear manner that I am perfectly aware of the energy of my crowd, as well as of my music."*

"Everyone is familiar with the buzzing in one's head after an evening at the club. As a producer and DJ, I'm dependent on my hearing and therefore wanted to protect it all costs," the 23-year-old explains.

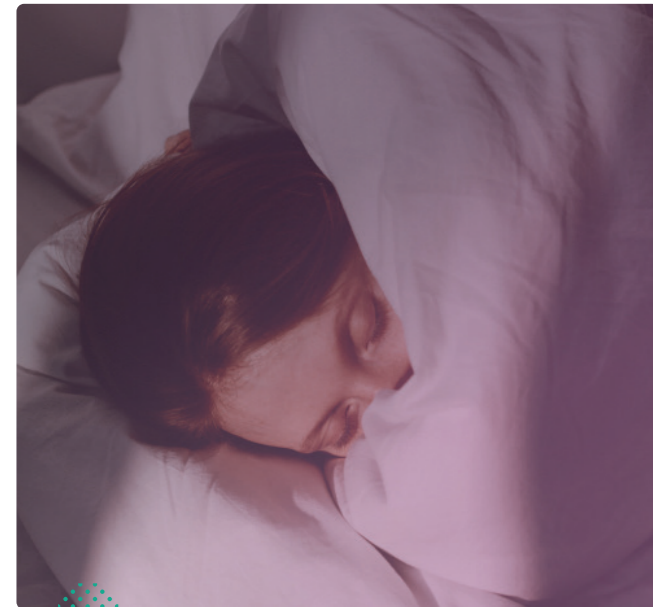
The DJ Toby Romeo has been wearing EARWEAR hearing protection since the end of last year. "I'm really glad that I have found hearing protection that is suitable for me, which protects me as a producer without restricting me," is how the DJ Toby Romeo, who is under contract at Universal, describes his individually adjusted hearing protection. "However, during my performances I only see few visitors protecting their hearing adequately. If at all, they use ear plugs that are not adjusted to their hearing," Toby Romeo states.



### Sources of noise and interference in everyday life

Noise sources can be found everywhere nowadays outside of discotheques and festivals: Whether it is on the street, during leisure activities or at the workplace – even the ambient noise of an open-plan office or of road traffic can damage hearing in the long term.

Accordingly, there is suitable hearing protection for leisure activities such as hunting or swimming, while hearing protection can also ensure better wellbeing in quite conventional everyday situations such as sleeping. Nighttime snoring noises of 60 to 70 decibels are common and are equivalent to the volume of a vacuum cleaner. For a good night's sleep in one's own home or when travelling, where so many interfering noises often make it difficult to fall asleep or stay asleep, SLEEP hearing protection is therefore essential. This is because noise also affects our concentration and productivity and can even cause raised blood pressure.



### New hearing protection for hunting

With the individually adjustable HUNT hearing protection in the EARWEAR line, newly developed last year specially for hunters, quiet sounds can be amplified while loud noises are insulated. This means that approaching game, as a quiet noise under 85 decibels, is acoustically perceived immediately, whereas when shooting the hearing protection shields the hearing in a fraction of a second. The impulse noise caused by shooting can soon reach over 150 decibels – reliable protection is therefore especially important here.

Especially from a technical point of view, hearing protection is a challenge for hunting in particular, as it is necessary for it to react within milliseconds to external acoustic changes and the amplification must be interrupted when sound insulation is required.

# 10 3D PRINTERS

*To improve the quality of the ear moulds (for hearing aids and hearing protection) and production efficiency, in 2023 the number of printers was extended by 5 high-tech devices with the latest technology at the Neuroth production plant in Lebring. In total, 10 of the latest 3D printers are now in use. With the new printer systems up to 50 ear moulds can be produced per procedure in just 120 minutes.*



## The path to individually adjusted hearing protection:

1st

### Ear casts at the hearing centre:

As hearing protection is a personal matter, a cast of the auditory canals is required, because these are as unique as a fingerprint. An appointment is arranged for this purpose with the hearing acoustician. The imprint of the auditory canals is then sent by the Neuroth branch by internal mail to the production department at the Europe-wide Supply Centre in Lebring (Austria).

2nd

### Individual production in Lebring:

At the production department, the ear cast is then scanned, i.e. digitised, and processed as a 3D model on the computer. The personal hearing protection is made in a 3D printing process from the final 3D data of the final ear mould. Neuroth always works with the latest technology and particularly skin-friendly materials. After all, not only must the hearing protection be perfect but also the quality. After printing, finishing and varnishing, the respective filters chosen by the customer are fitted, depending on the product. Before the finished hearing protection is sent to the respective hearing centre, quality control gives it a final inspection. After being successfully checked, the product is packaged, labelled and sent to the respective Neuroth branch.

3rd

### Handover and adjustment at the hearing centre:

The customer attends the agreed appointment at the Neuroth branch. During collection, the hearing acoustician checks the functions again, depending on the product – for certified hearing protection, the functional checking of the insulating capacity is legally mandatory – and how the hearing protection fits in and on the customer's ear. After all, nothing should press or feel unpleasant – no matter for which activity or type of leisure the hearing protection is used.

# TECHNOLOGY MEETS TRADITION.



An interview with CEO Lukas Schinko.

The 37-year-old Chief Executive Officer of the Neuroth Group talks about his career at the family enterprise, the balancing act between innovation and tradition, and why he privately ended up in Switzerland a few years ago.

BY JAN SACHER •

***Mr Schinko, let's start with the business year 22/23: How satisfied are you with it?***

I'm really very proud of what we achieved in the previous year: With 167 million euros, we achieved the highest groupwide turnover in Neuroth history, expanded to 280 locations and 1300 employees and created our first own exclusive trademark with Viennatone. That was teamwork at its best, huge thanks to everyone!

***And now about you personally: You are the fourth generation to lead Neuroth. What's it like to grow up in an entrepreneurial family?***

Very exciting right from an early age. My two siblings are six and eight years older than me. And as our company used to be situated right next door to my parents' house in Schwarzenau in Southeastern Styria, I spent a lot of time at the company already from a young age. From the repairs workshop to the logistics department, I flitted around everywhere as a little nipper. And although my family always had a lot to do, we also spent a lot of time together, because everything was situated so nearby.

***Which departments have you worked your way up through from starting at the company in the year 2007 to your position as CEO in 2011?***

Before that, I attended the Higher Technical College for Telecommunications, which is why I soon found my way to the IT department. Then I ended up working in product management through production. In the meantime, I started the apprenticeship and

then master training in hearing acoustics. Then I was in the marketing department for a while before completing the master qualification, before finally taking over sales.

***And then you took over the company at the age of 24, as the fourth generation. How were you able to acquire the competences this role requires so quickly?***

Right at the beginning there was a lot of trial and error. However, I soon took on a coach who supervised me. This later became a series of coaches. This helped me the most in my personal development. And whenever I noticed that I needed expert input, I obtained it in a targeted manner through various seminars and an awful lot of books.

***The Neuroth head office is in the Styrian capital Graz, but privately you moved to Switzerland with your family. Why?***

Around the year 2015 I came to a point in my life when I was no longer in contact with other entrepreneurial people. As I took over the company at a young age, I had to ask myself: What should I orientate myself towards? Who can I talk to? With whom can I speak openly about challenges? I simply realised that I sometimes had to leave the homeland for that purpose and develop further personally. That's why I moved to Switzerland with my family and appreciate, for example, Zurich as an international hub.



# BETWEEN INNOVATION & TRADITION

## How often are you in Styria for work?

Almost every week. Our Europe-wide headquarters are in Graz, our Supply Centre is in Lebring, and personal communication is very, very important to me. That's why I need contact with colleagues. So I go to Graz nearly every week. The rest of the time I work either at our Swiss head office or sometimes from my home office.

## Are there things that are different in Switzerland to your home country?

As similar as the cultures in Austria and Switzerland seem at first glance, they are actually quite different upon further consideration. In terms of quality of life, the two countries are by all means comparable. When it comes to food, however, I have a distinct preference for Austrian cuisine. (laughs)

## How many hours do you work per week?

That also varies a lot. There are weeks when I work around 60 hours but some weeks it's only 40. On average, my working hours are probably close to 50 hours. In my mind though, I'm always thinking about work to a certain extent, even when I'm not at the office. In fact, the only time I'm not thinking about work is when I'm out and about with my children. They then have my full attention.

## What is your vision with Neuroth?

My vision is to achieve with hearing aids what glasses have achieved: that they are accepted as support as a matter of course. I think we are still a long way off this, even though the technology has advanced so much. The generation before me was already hoping

to achieve this. I don't know why this has not quite been accomplished yet. Will I succeed in doing so? Hopefully. In any case, I will do everything in my power to raise awareness of our Hearing Power in the long term.

## What do you do differently to previous generations when it comes to corporate management?

I think there is a lot that I do differently, because our times require it. Neuroth would not work anymore if I led the company in the same way as say 15 years ago. The speed of communication that we are experiencing nowadays, the shorter attention spans of customers and employees, are an ongoing challenge. These are all consequences of digitisation and the constantly improving technology. The technology cycles are increasingly speeding up also in hearing acoustics. However, what has remained the same for over 115 years is our unwavering dedication to our work and the way we view Hearing Power and spark enthusiasm among our customers for the topic of hearing.

## Are there experiences or learning in your private life that now flow into the company?

I think it's more the other way around. Many things that I've learnt when dealing with employees and colleagues over the many years now flow into bringing up my children.

## Let's get a bit more personal: What music genres do you like listening to?

It varies a lot. I nearly always listen to music when I'm working or studying. Almost everything from hard rock to techno to classical music. It depends on the situation I'm in at that moment. If I have to think

creatively, I listen to different genres than during tasks that are less fun, or if the music is supposed to reflect my emotional mood.

## What kind of a situation might you be in if you're listening to techno?

During more monotonous work or if I'm replying to a host of e-mails.

## What is your favourite sound?

When my dog Hector barks. Somehow I have always been able to distinguish it from all other dogs.

## You have a daughter and a son of playschool age. Do you think that they will continue the family enterprise one day?

That's up to them. They should decide for themselves whether that is what they want. And if they don't feel like doing it and wouldn't do it willingly, but felt somehow pressured into that role, I would be the first to raise my hand and object.

## What's on the cards for Neuroth in the forthcoming years?

We want to strengthen our spirit further in our countries, continuously develop further as a company and continue to enthuse our customers with new hearing solutions. One of the greatest

opportunities is the wave of baby boomers that is coming our way. This generation is proud of its health and might reject a hearing aid as a help a little more vehemently than we are used to. In addition, there are of course challenges on the labour market. It is important to us to find committed and enthusiastic employees like those we currently have at the company, in the long term.

## Thank you for the interesting discussion!

Thank you!



# 255

Lukas Schinko was a sought-after interview partner for the media once again in the business year 22/23. There were editorial reports about Neuroth in the last business year in over 250 articles.

“ There's a lot that I do differently, but what has not changed is the way we view Hearing Power and spark enthusiasm among our customers for the topic of "hearing".



# Training and education know **no age.**

To become a hearing acoustician and thereby help people to achieve better hearing – whether they are old or young, Neuroth’s apprentices always have this same goal in mind. Two apprentices from different generations talk about their motivation, what makes their job so special and what they love about it.

BY SARAH ROMAUCH •

The Neuroth Group not only provides its customers with the best possible support under the motto “Better hearing, better living” but also offers around 1300 people in eight countries a meaningful job.

Alongside the already optimally trained team of hearing acousticians, in the business year 2022/23 Neuroth gave around 70 apprentices in Austria and Switzerland alone the opportunity to gain a footing in



Janine (17) is the very first apprentice on the traditional three-year hearing acoustician course in Austria.

~70

**In the business year 2022/23, Neuroth offered around 70 apprentices in Austria and Switzerland alone the opportunity to gain a foothold in an industry that has a bright future.**



30,281

**Training and further education are very important at Neuroth. In 2022/23, our colleagues completed 30,281 hours of training – which is 10,227 hours more than in the previous year.**

an industry with a bright future. On various training courses, apprentices are trained to advise customers on all matters surrounding hearing aids or hearing protection. They are offered a varied, as well as challenging occupational profile. The hearing acoustics apprentices get to know their everyday work with a practical orientation at a hearing centre and are in direct customer contact already from the beginning. Apart from practical work, they are also taught

theoretical knowledge at various training sites. During the apprenticeship, the apprentices acquire not only all the technical bases needed for assessing hearing ability and adjusting hearing systems but also all the personal competences required for advising customers optimally.

**Making the most of new opportunities**  
Once one has chosen a profession and has worked for several years in a particular field, it is often difficult to take a new direction. But Neuroth has made an apprenticeship possible as second chance education. It is possible to complete an apprenticeship as a hearing acoustician as part of a two-year training course. It doesn't matter what previous training the apprentices have – with the right dedication, character and competence, Neuroth is happy to offer the opportunity to reinvent oneself even at a more advanced age.

Christian Messner (52) is learning the profession of hearing acoustician as a secondary training course.



**A new start at 50+**  
Christian Messner is doing precisely that. In the middle of the corona pandemic in the year 2021, he started an apprenticeship as a hearing acoustician in Austria as a second chance education. He completed the training this year. Since starting the apprenticeship, he has been working at the hearing centre in Klagenfurt in Carinthia. Before starting his apprenticeship at Neuroth, he had worked for 32 years as a qualified nurse in hospitals. For health reasons, he took the opportunity to retrain, which gave Christian Messner a place as a hearing acoustician apprentice at Neuroth at the age of 50.

“It is working with people that is so enjoyable. You get to know a lot of people and for them you're not only a hearing acoustician but also an important caregiver,” Messner recounts. This was something he already liked about his previous profession, which is why it was clear to him that he wanted to stay within healthcare as part of his second chance

education. In his work as a nurse, Christian Messner was able to acquire certain competences that are also helpful in his current profession: “There are many things that I was already aware of that I can now make use of. But now I simply have a different perspective than before.”

Christian Messner was won over back then by the open day. He was invited to accompany colleagues at the hearing centre in Klagenfurt for a day and to look over their shoulder as they were working. After a day together and sounding each other out, it was clear to Christian Messner that he wanted to make Hearing Power his profession through second chance education. The now 52-year-old wants to stay at Neuroth. “I really like everything about it, my colleagues are great and there is a boss to deal with everything I don't like,” Messner laughs.





**The very first apprentice of her kind**

Janine Hanser was also convinced to go for it by the open day at Neuroth. She and Christian Messner share their love of the profession and of people. The big difference is their age. As part of a pilot project, Neuroth started for the first time in Austria to attract young people to the profession of hearing acoustician through first chance education. In March 2023, 17-year-old Janine was the very first apprentice to start attending the traditional three-year training course at the hearing centre in Villach (Carinthia).

Before starting the training, Janine attended a federal secondary school. Janine became aware of the profession of hearing acoustician through her mother, who works in childcare and takes care of a child with a hearing aid. A job advert prompted Janine to apply and it was especially the open day at Neuroth that convinced her to go for it. "I could ask anything I liked there and the colleagues were very nice to me. I always felt at ease. And the customers were also very friendly!" Janine states. What Janine

finds especially interesting about the profession is the contact with people, which helped her to forge close connections to customers within a short time.

**Not a trace of generational conflict**

Janine successfully overcame the fear that older persons might not take her as a young person seriously in such a profession. "Most people are very open to cooperating with me as a young person. My empathy helps me a lot if people are sometimes reserved." Janine's hearing centre leader Tanja Strohmeier also helps her as a trainer whenever she can. Since Janine started, she has seen not only professional development. "Janine has grown here every day, has become more open and especially more self-confident. I do think that this is due to the daily contact with people," Strohmeier recounts about her protégée. She also sees great opportunities in the endeavour to attract young people to the profession. "It is enriching for us to have such young people on the team and I think it is great that so many different age groups

> 10

**More than 10 young apprentices are completing their hearing acoustics training as first-chance education at Neuroth, around 30 started their training as second-chance education in Austria and in Switzerland in 2022/23. In addition, over 30 colleagues were able to start and already successfully completed their hearing consultant training in 2022/23.**

are represented. Each and every one has their own character and that makes us stronger."

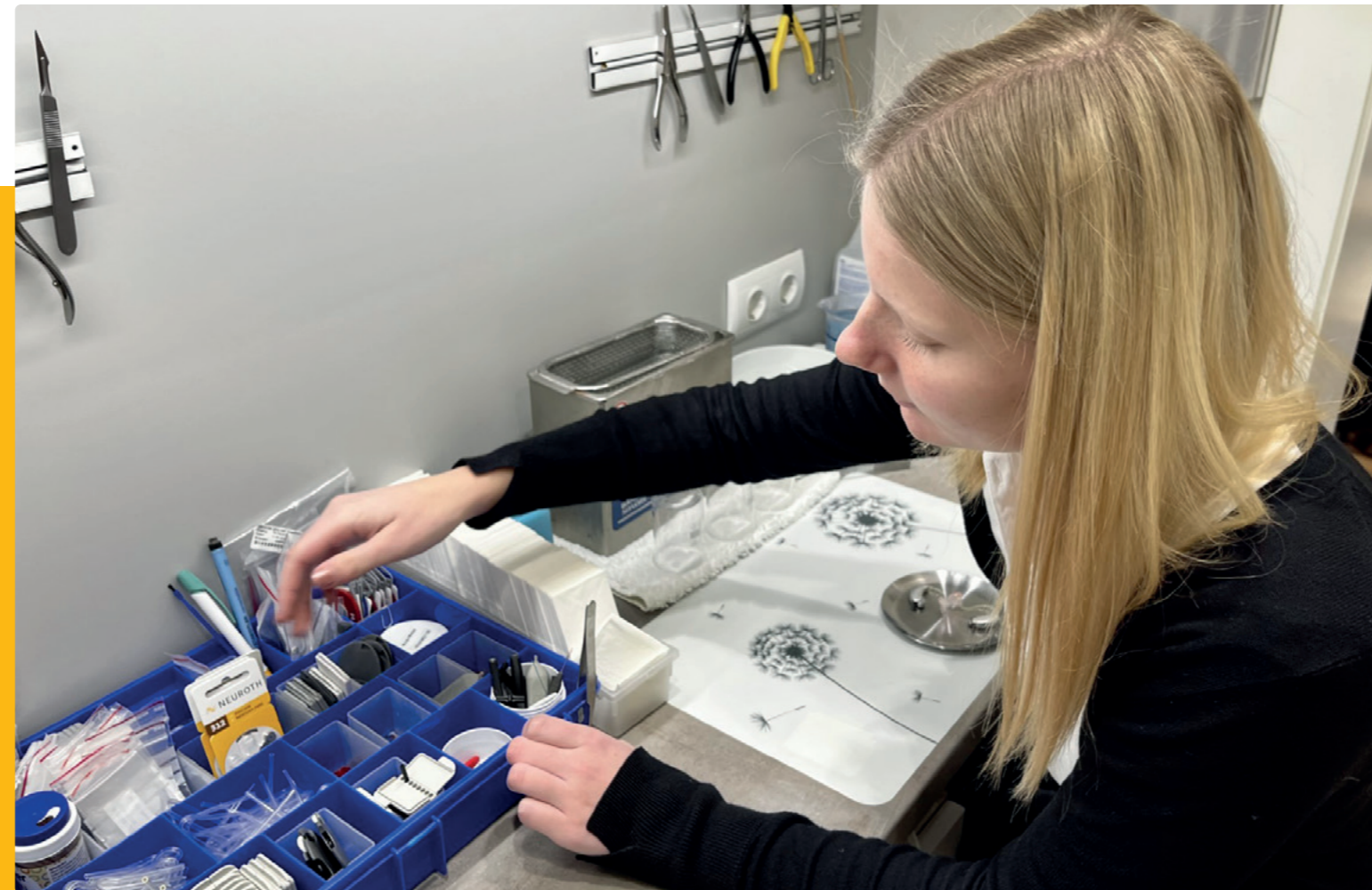
Christian Messner, who also has an apprentice at the hearing centre from the pilot project under his

colleague, also sees big potential in this. "Fresh, young knowledge is an advantage for everyone. I think that when the young apprentices have completed their training, they will be better equipped than my generation," he says.

Janine will attend the vocational school for ten weeks as from February, where she can acquire theoretical knowledge about the profession alongside her practical skills. She doesn't mind that she is in training for a year longer than her older colleagues. "I have more time to learn everything and I see

that as an advantage," she states. Janine expects to complete her apprenticeship in 2026 as a qualified hearing acoustician. Time will tell where ambitious Janine's path will take her in future at Neuroth.

The 17-year-old has been supporting her colleagues from the beginning in everyday work in the field of hearing ability and hearing protection.



At the hearing centre in Villach, Janine is learning all the practical aspects of the profession and the theory at the vocational school in Innsbruck.

Apply to Neuroth now!

You can find job opportunities under: [neuroth.com](https://neuroth.com)



# TEAM NEUROTH

Together for  
better health!



Under the motto #weareneuroth, Neuroth promotes the team spirit and health of its own employees through a variety of activities. In 2023 there were also various highlights.

#### Wings for Life World Run

Neuroth was also represented at the Wings for Life Run in May 2023, together with over 200,000 people worldwide – to run for those who can't do so themselves. Our #weareneuroth team also played a small role in gathering 1,573,221 kilometres in the end and therefore an outstanding sum of donations amounting to 5.8 million euros. 100 percent of this flows into spinal cord research. Neuroth took part once again this year!

#### Hearing Power on two wheels

For all those who prefer to be out and about on two wheels rather than on two legs, Neuroth provided sports inspiration and motivation in spring 2023: "Cycle into the spring with Hearing Power" was the motto under which Neuroth cycling jerseys were raffled. The CFO of the Neuroth Group, Michael Paul, as a professed cycling enthusiast, presented the new cycling fashion during his first excursion last year.

The annual cycle event "AJM Team Time Ride" also took place once again in Maribor (Slovenia), where Neuroth teams joined the starting lineup already for the tenth time.

#### #weareneuroth hiking day



What better way to round off the business year in September than with a leisurely team hiking day! A number of Neuroth-ics who are walking enthusiasts set out in different locations throughout Austria on a joint hiking day adventure, walking through gorges, climbing peaks and then rewarding themselves with ice cream or a meal.



#### Business running events

In 2023 Neuroth also took part enthusiastically in business running events in and around Graz, the Europe-wide Neuroth headquarters. On this occasion, Neuroth employees can look forward to new Hearing Power shirts in yellow and sea green! It was great to see how different teams came together to run alongside each other.



Photo gallery  
on p. 54/55





# #weareneuroth

Because we care about people.

Hearing forges connections and weaves a network between people. Neuroth as a family-owned enterprise likes to take social responsibility – also for the environment. A couple of facts from the year 2023.

BY MARES KOHLMAYR •



### Neuroth & Mosaik – together we are stronger

Dagmar Gerstgrasser and René Zimmermann from the non-profit organisation "Mosaik", whose task is dare, advice and support for disadvantaged people, are an important part of the Neuroth team. They have been supporting the logistics department since August 2022 and helping with packaging tasks or counting and labelling articles.

### The gift of hearing and warmth

Around Christmas time it has become a tradition for Neuroth to make donations in the various countries. For example, last year in Austria the Austrian Disabled Sports Association (ÖBSV) was supported with 10,000 euros: "Supporting people and enabling a better quality of life is what drives us every day. We are therefore particularly



happy to support sportspeople in practising what they are passionate about," says Ronny Bauer, MD of Neuroth Austria. In addition, Neuroth in Austria donated 5000 euros to the "Ein Funken Wärme" ('A Spark of Warmth') campaign by Kronen Zeitung and Caritas. Neuroth Switzerland supported the international "Hear the World Foundation", which enables children with hearing loss to access audiological care.

### Corporate volunteering

In 2023, Neuroth offered Corporate Volunteering for the first time within the company. This allows Neuroth employees to get involved in various charitable causes during their working hours, in order to gather valuable insights and encounters outside of the own everyday working environment. Amongst others, this has resulted in cooperation with the organisation "LebensGroß", which was delighted with our Neuroth-ics' support.



## N like Neuroth or No waste.



### Reduction of packaging waste

In the year 2023, Neuroth switched to reusable packaging for transporting goods between the branches and the Supply Centre. This allows an expected 9 tons of cardboard boxes to be saved a year going forwards.

9T

### Reduction of CO<sup>2</sup> when sending packages

In the business year 2022/2023, a total of 98,640 packages were sent. Neuroth cooperates, amongst others, with Österreichische Post AG, for whom sustainability is firmly anchored in their corporate strategy – in the year 2022, 18,500 kg of CO<sup>2</sup> were compensated for in Neuroth dispatches.

18.5K

### Energy Saving

At the Supply Centre in Lebring, the total electricity consumption in the business year 2022/23 was reduced by 18 % (over 83,000 kWh) compared to the previous year – that corresponds to the annual consumption of around 20 households in Austria.

105,155 kWh were saved at Austrian hearing centres alone – corresponding to the annual consumption of around 26 households in Austria.

18%

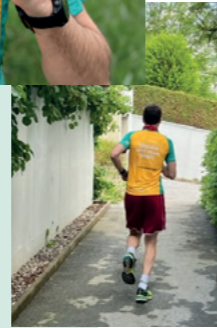


We are active. We are strong. Together we are Neuroth. A couple of colourful insights into our yellow and sea green world representing #weareneuroth.

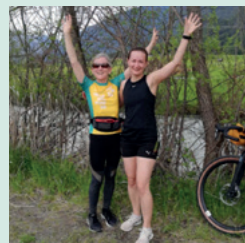


Running shoes were dusted off for a good cause

Many participants took to the start line for Team Neuroth at the Wings for Life World Run



#weareneuroth hiking day



ÖBSV sportspeople visit our Supply Centre in Lebring



CFO Michael Paul's first excursion with the Neuroth jersey

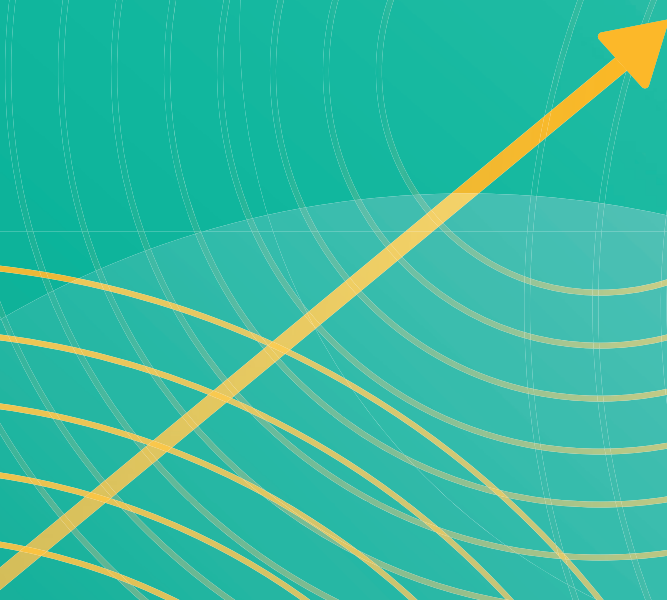


Heading into the spring with Hearing Power cycle jerseys



# HEAR ING POWER ER

neuroth.com



 NEUROTH

# 23