

# Why men don't listen to women

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.anthropology.paleo/2005-08/msg00348.html>

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  - *Date:* Tue, 09 Aug 2005 18:13:02 GMT
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6 August 2005

ER, YOU WHAT, LUV?

Men's brains not designed to listen to women's voices

By Lorraine Fisher Health Correspondent

FELLAS accused by women of never listening to them now have the perfect excuse.

Their brains simply aren't designed to listen to women's voices - at first it thinks it is music then has to analyse what they are saying.

Researchers at the University of Sheffield tracked the brain activity of male volunteers who were played recordings of different voices.

Their brains worked harder to decipher what the women were saying - using a part of the brain that processes music. Men engaged a simpler mechanism at the back of the brain when they heard a male voice, recognising it as speech and comparing it to how they spoke.

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Dr Michael Hunter, who led the research, said: "The female voice is more complex than the male, due to differences in the size and shape of the vocal cords and larynx.

"Also women have a greater natural 'melody' in their voices. This causes a more complex range of frequencies than in a male. When a man hears a female voice the auditory section of his brain is activated, which analyses the different sounds to 'read' the voice.

"When men hear a male voice they process it in the 'mind's eye'. This is the part of the brain where people compare their experiences to themselves, so the man is comparing his own voice to the new voice."

The findings, published in the journal *NeuroImage*, may explain why people suffering hallucinations usually hear a male voice - the brain finds it harder to conjure up a false female voice.

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