

SOUND AFFECTS

Tips for Prevention of Hearing Loss

- Have your hearing tested once a year. Free hearing exams are offered by most audiologists or hearing specialists.
- Limit exposure time to noisy environments.
- If your occupation causes you to be at risk for hearing loss, wear ear protection. Occupations particularly at risk are: firefighters, police officers, factory workers, farmers, construction workers, military personnel, heavy industry workers, airline industry workers, musicians and entertainment industry professionals.
- For firearm users, permanent hearing loss can occur with just a few unprotected shots, so shooters should always be advised to use appropriate hearing protection when using guns.
- Some drugs have side effects which can damage hearing. Talk to your pharmacist or doctor when a new medication has been prescribed.
- Check with your doctor before flying with a cold or while congested; you may need to protect your ears against changes in air pressure.
- Products such as volume controls, noise canceling earphones and various types of earplugs help address the growing hearing loss problem by reducing decibel output.
- Stand clear and away from loudspeakers when in clubs or at concerts.
- Wear protective earplugs (foamies or musician plugs) if regularly exposed to loud music, e.g., as a frequent clubber, DJ or musician.
- Popular in-ear headsets, called earbuds, produce higher decibel output. Consider using custom fit head sets which allow for lower volume while maintaining a purer sound.



Is Hearing Loss Affecting Your Life?

For most of your life, hearing is as natural as breathing. You listen without thinking, converse with ease, and are awakened from sleep by the subtlest of audio cues. Yet little by little, things have changed. You realize how often you have to ask people to repeat themselves. How exhausting it's become to attend a meeting. And how the TV is too loud for everyone but you. What's going on?

Explore the topics below. Learn about hearing loss, including the importance of hearing, how to spot the signs of hearing loss in yourself or someone close to you, and interesting facts and myths about hearing loss.

Facts & Figures

Hearing loss is more common than you might think. Due to recreational and environmental noise, hearing loss is occurring at younger and younger ages. Consider the facts:

Hearing Loss Facts

- Only 16% of physicians routinely screen for hearing loss
- Only about 10% of hearing losses are helped by surgery or other medical treatment
- 90% of hearing losses can be treated with the use of hearing instruments
- Noise above 80-90 decibels on average over an 8-hour workday is considered hazardous
- Firearms, music, airplanes, lawn mowers, power tools and many appliances are louder than 80 decibels and potentially hazardous to hearing with prolonged exposure

Demographics

- 28 million Americans are hearing-impaired, and an estimated 500 million experience hearing loss worldwide
- In the U.S., one out of twelve 30-year-olds is already hearing-impaired and one in eight 50-year-olds suffers from hearing loss
- 3 out of 1000 children are born with hearing loss
- After President Bill Clinton was fitted for hearing instruments, more than 1 million other baby boomers identified themselves as experiencing hearing loss
- There are more baby boomers aged 45-64 with a hearing loss (10 million) than there are people over the age of 65 with a hearing loss (9 million)
- 60% of people with hearing loss are males
- More than a third of all hearing loss is attributed to noise: loud music, loud workplaces, loud recreational equipment
- We are losing our hearing at a younger age than we were 30 years ago



MYTHS & FACTS

Myth: Only a few people are truly hearing-impaired; the statistics don't apply to me or those close to me.

Fact: With 28 million reporting hearing loss in this country alone, or one in 10 people, odds are good that you or someone you know is indeed affected by hearing loss.

Myth: If I did have a hearing impairment, I'd certainly know about it.

Fact: The truth is, hearing loss happens gradually and the signs are subtle at first. Our own built-in defenses and ability to adapt make it difficult to self-diagnose. A simple Q & A hearing test can help you gain insight, while professional screening can provide a more definitive answer.

Myth: Most hearing problems can't be helped.

Fact: 30 or 40 years ago, that was true. Today, 90% of hearing loss—the kind that's brought on by age or exposure to noise—is very responsive to treatment in the form of technically advanced hearing instruments.

Myth: If you're hearing-impaired, it just means sounds aren't loud enough.

Fact: Hearing isn't only about loudness or decibel level. Typically, hearing loss has more to do with the frequency of the sound—that is, its pitch—than its loudness. When hearing loss occurs, it's harder to hear higher pitches—especially when there is competing background noise, such as conversation in a noisy restaurant. That's why increasing the volume alone isn't as effective in treating hearing loss as amplifying sounds selectively.

Myth: Living with hearing loss is not a big deal.

Fact: There are many psychological effects to hearing loss, including frustration, withdrawal, and depression. Trouble communicating with others creates a strain on relationships and a loss of self-esteem. It's far better to deal with hearing loss than to pretend it isn't happening—or to ignore the effect it is having on those around you.



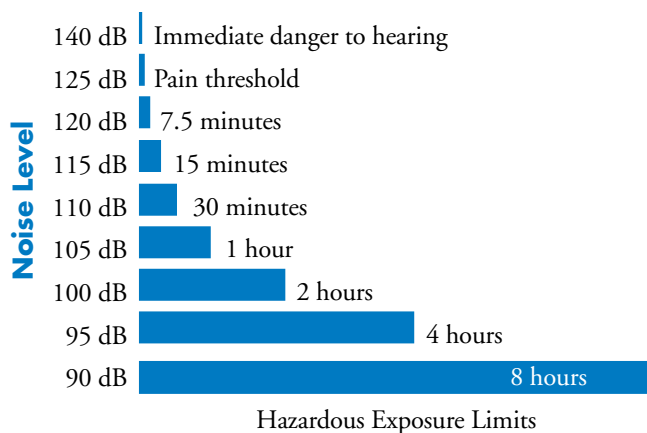
What Can I Do About Hearing Loss?

While hearing loss isn't reversible, most age or noise related loss can be managed and often compensated for. Just as eyeglasses are used to correct most vision problems, hearing instruments are used to treat most kinds of hearing loss. Any treatment starts with a hearing screening by a doctor or hearing professional. Once you know the nature and extent of the hearing loss, you'll be able to make your own decisions about treatment. But first, take the opportunity to educate yourself about hearing and how hearing loss occurs.

Noise & Time Exposure Limitations For the Human Ear

Prolonged noise can damage your hearing - even short bursts of sound over 90 decibels can have an impact. The following information should be used as a guide for determining hazardous noise exposure levels.

Noise Level	Activity
140 dB	Gunshot, Jet engine at take-off
125 dB	Air raid siren, Firecracker
120 dB	Rock concert, Sandblasting
115 dB	Baby's cry, Stadium football game
110 dB	Snowmobile from driver's seat
105 dB	Jackhammer, Helicopter
100 dB	Chain saw, Stereo headphones
95 dB	Motorcycle, Power saw
90 dB	Lawn mower, Truck traffic
85 dB	Beginning of OSHA regulations
30 dB	Faint Sound, Whisper



Permanent hearing loss can occur in as little as 15 minutes with exposure to certain sounds, and almost instantly with unprotected exposure to sounds generated from firearms and certain power tools. If your hearing is exposed to any sounds above 90 decibels, you need to take immediate action to prevent permanent hearing damage.

Source: www.betterhearing.org



www.sotheworldmayhear.org

For more information about hearing conservation or for a free hearing exam, go to

www.soundaffects.org

866.354.3254