

Hearing Health Information

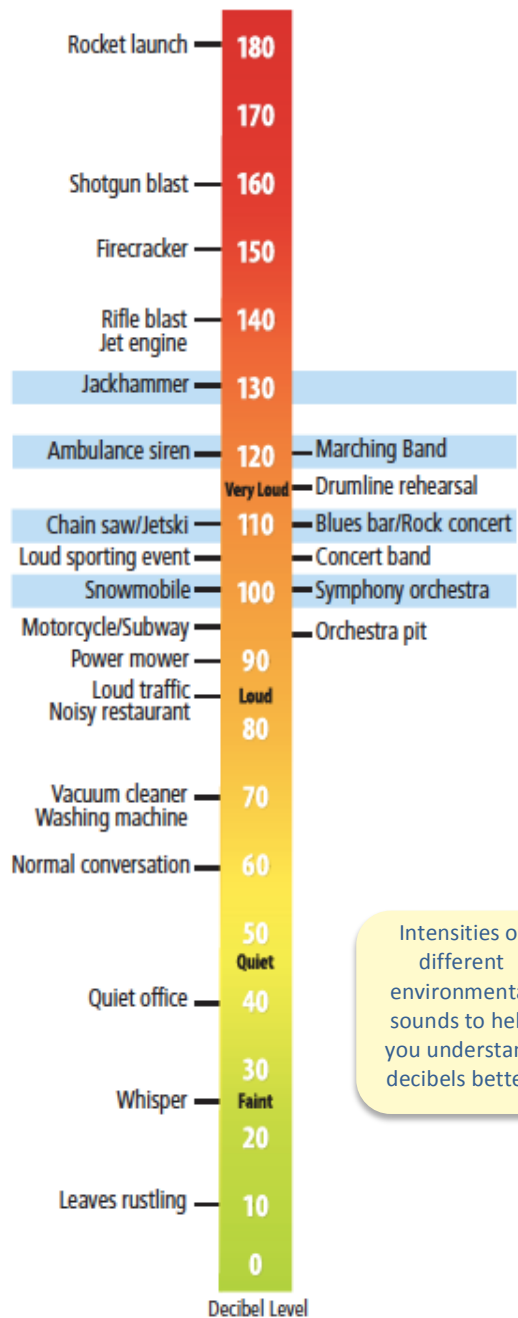
The World Health Organization estimates that 1 out of 2 young people are at risk of hearing loss due to unsafe listening habits.

- Exposure to loud sounds (e.g. music or noise) causes fatigue of the sensory cells of the ear. This results in temporary hearing loss or tinnitus (a ringing sensation in the ear).
- However, when the exposure to sound is particularly loud, regular or prolonged, it can permanently damage the ear's sensory cells and other structures, resulting in **irreversible** recreational noise-induced hearing loss. The high-frequency range (i.e. high-pitched sounds) is impacted first and may not be noticeable immediately.
- Continued exposure to loud sounds leads to the progression of hearing loss, ultimately affecting speech comprehension, perception of meaningful environmental sounds and quality of life.
- Since hearing loss tends to disrupt interpersonal communication, some individuals experience significant levels of distress as a result of their hearing difficulties.
- Exposure to loud sounds in young people also contributes to age-related hearing loss.
- Hearing loss can affect many aspects of life, including a person's social and educational development, as well as the ability to work.
- Some people may be more susceptible to hearing loss than others. Genetic predisposition, chronic conditions such as diabetes are known to increase the risk of acquiring noise-induced hearing loss. Since we cannot tell who the most susceptible individuals are, prevention is the most effective way to avoid hearing loss.

A way to avoid acquiring recreational noise-induced hearing loss is by adopting safe listening habits. Safe listening depends on the intensity (loudness measured in decibels), duration (length of time) and frequency (how often) of the exposure. These three factors are interrelated and contribute to the overall sound dose that one's ears are exposed to.

The louder the sound is, the less time you can safely listen to it. When using your personal listening device, sound levels of 80 dB are considered safe for 40 hours per week. The permissible time for safe listening decreases as sound levels increase (see example below).

dB(A) SPL	Weekly (1.6 Pa ² h)
107	4.5 minutes
104	9.5 minutes
101	37.5 minutes
98	75 minutes
95	2.5 hours
92	5 hours
89	10 hours
86	20 hours
83	20 hours
80	40 hours



Intensities of different environmental sounds to help you understand decibels better.

Safe listening tips to prevent recreational noise-induced hearing loss:

Tip 1: Lower the volume (keep in mind the table above).

Tip 2: Limit your listening time, as it would lower the overall sound dose your ears are exposed to.

Tip 3: Monitor your listening habits.

Tip 4: Use carefully fitted noise-cancelling earphones/headphones to allow music to be heard at lower sound levels.

Tip 5: Hearing screening can help to identify the onset of hearing loss at an early stage.