



If you can read this, it might be too loud

It's a noisy world. And although high-decibel noise is everywhere — from leaf blowers in the neighborhood to heavy weights crashing down at the health club — one popular everyday item that may contribute to hearing loss is the personal stereo system and headset, or the mp3 player. These items — which are used by just about everyone, from joggers and commuters to teenagers and office workers — produce sound levels of 105-120 decibels, which is considerably higher than what some hearing experts consider “too loud.” Sounds at or above 85 decibels may cause permanent hearing loss with prolonged exposure.

Aside from loud music, “too loud” noise can be found many places:

- Electric Drill: 95 decibels
- Ambulance Siren: 120 decibels
- Stock Car Races: 130 decibels
- Busy Game Arcades: 110 decibels
- Noisy Children's Toys: up to 135 decibels

There are ways to protect against hearing loss. The following prevention tips are for all individuals — both young and old - to keep in mind:

1. **Get Hearing Tests:** Get periodic hearing tests from a licensed audiologist or hearing aid dispenser.
2. **Limit the Volume of your mp3 Player:** If you cannot hear other people talking when you are wearing headphones or if other people have to shout to you to be heard at three feet away while the headphones are on, it is too loud and could be damaging to your hearing.
3. **Check your Medications:** Be aware of the side effects of your medications, which can cause temporary or permanent hearing loss. Some over-the-counter and prescription medications known to be ototoxic include antibiotics, chemotherapy drugs and anti-inflammatory drugs.
4. **Limit Exposure:** Limit exposure to music concerts, stadium sports or loud equipment like lawn mowers or leaf blowers that may be damaging to your hearing.
5. **Carry Ear Plugs:** Always carry ear plugs in your purse, car or briefcase; you never know when you will find yourself in noise pollution.

To know more,
contact ACDHH directly.

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