



How loud is too loud?

Contact ACDHH to learn more.

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Fact Sheet

It's a noisy world. Sounds at or above 85 decibels may cause permanent hearing loss with prolonged exposure. 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.”

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

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. **Volume Control:** Limit the Volume of your digital music. If you cannot hear other people talking when you are wearing earbuds / headphones or if other people have to shout to be heard at three feet away while listening to music, it is too loud and could be damaging to your hearing.
3. **Noisy Toys:** When shopping for children, buyers should be aware of the possible danger of noisy toys. A free decibel meter app can be downloaded to your smart phone or mobile device. This is an easy way to measure the volume of any sound producing toy. If the sound is over 85 dB (decibels), choose a different toy or put tape over the speaker, and limit the amount of time the child spends with the toy.
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 car, bag, backpack, or briefcase; you never know when you will find yourself in a noisy environment.



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