Did you Know?

Noise is all around us in our everyday environments and is a common cause of hearing loss.

- 36 million Americans have hearing loss. One in three developed their hearing loss as a result of exposure to noise.

- Noise-induced hearing loss typically occurs slowly, over a long period of time, and is painless.

- Hearing impairment not only affects your ability to understand speech but also has a negative impact on your social and emotional well-being.

- Hearing loss from noise exposure is preventable!


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Noise, Noise...Everywhere!

One of the most common places you may encounter noise is at home. Noise-induced hearing loss can occur from prolonged exposure to everyday household items such as:
- Lawn equipment
- Power tools
- Toys
- MP3 players
- Stereo and TV sound systems
- Appliances (blenders, hand mixers, food processors, and hair dryers)

You may also be exposed to noise while attending:
- Sporting events
- Concerts
- Dance clubs or bars
- Exercise classes
- Auto racing events
- Fireworks displays

Or during recreational activities such as:
- Motorcycle riding
- Snowmobiling
- Shooting firearms

Hazardous noise levels are also frequently encountered in the workplace.

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Levels of Noise In decibels (dB)

**PAINFUL & DANGEROUS**

| Use hearing protection or avoid | 140 | Fireworks
|                                |     | Gun shots
|                                |     | Custom car stereos (at full volume)
|                                | 130 | Jackhammers
|                                |     | Emergency vehicle sirens

**UNCOMFORTABLE**

| Dangerous over 30 seconds | 120 | Jet planes (during take off)

**VERY LOUD**

| Dangerous over 30 minutes | 110 | Concerts (any genre of music)
|                            |     | Car horns
|                            |     | Sporting events
|                            | 100 | Snowmobiles
|                            |     | MP3 players (at full volume)
|                            |     | Lawnmowers
|                            |     | Power tools
|                            |     | Blenders
|                            |     | Hair dryers

**LOUD**

| 90 | Alarm clocks
|    | Traffic
|    | Vacuums

**MODERATE**

| 60 | Normal conversation
|    | Dishwashers
|    | Moderate rainfall

**SOFT**

| 40 | Quiet library
|    | Whisper

**FAINT**

| 20 | Leaves rustling

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FAQs

**Can I permanently lose my hearing from exposure to loud noise?**

Yes, permanent hearing loss can result from prolonged exposure to loud noise over 85 decibels (dB). This type of hearing loss is called “sensorineural” hearing loss. There is no medicine or surgery that can reverse the damage.

**What is that ringing sound in my ears?**

The ringing is called “tinnitus” and typically occurs after periods of noise exposure. Tinnitus can be permanent and may affect your quality of life, as many musicians can attest.

**How do I know if a noise is dangerous?**

As a general rule, noise may damage your hearing if:
- You have to shout over background noise to make yourself heard
- The noise makes your ears ring
- You have decreased or “muffled” hearing for several hours after exposure
- The noise is painful to your ears

**How can I protect my hearing?**

- Wear ear protection such as earplugs or earmuffs when you are attending a loud concert or using firearms, power tools, or lawn equipment.
- Turn down the volume while listening to music on a stereo system or a personal music device (such as an MP3 player).
- Walk away from the noise.

**What if I suspect I have a hearing loss?**

Make an appointment to see an audiologist, who will perform a hearing test to determine the type and severity of hearing loss you may have.