

Noise: Its effects on hearing and tinnitus

How to Protect your Hearing

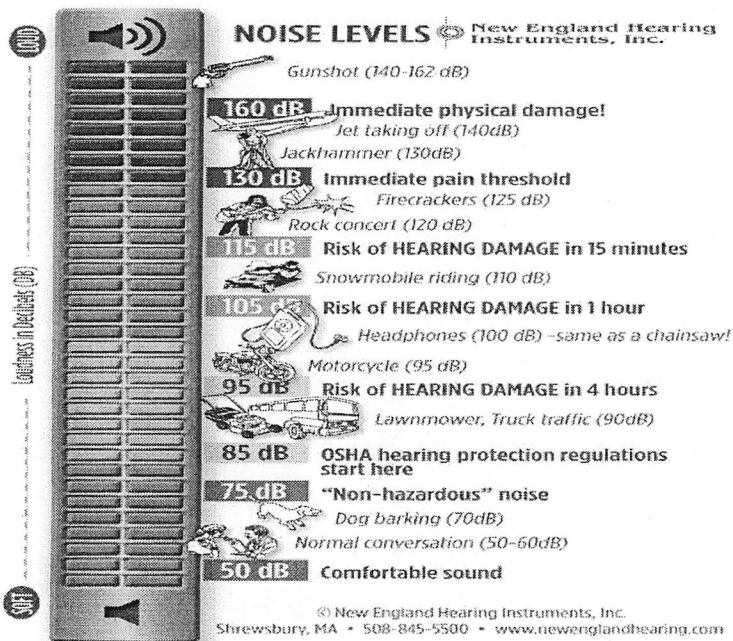
Noise is all around us. You experience noise every day. In your home, outside, and with MP3 players!! You can't stay away from all noises, but there are things you can do to protect your hearing.

Tips include:

- Turning down the volume on the television, radio and MP3 players.
- Wear hearing protection when using loud equipment like lawnmowers, power tools, leaf blowers
- Buy quieter appliances and toys. Look for the decibel (dB) level written on the packaging.

When is noise dangerous and how is it measured?

Hearing loss caused by loud noise is called noise-induced hearing loss. This can happen over time by being exposed to loud noise on-the-job. It can also happen by a sudden blast of noise such as a firecracker or gun shot. Experts agree that listening to sounds of 85 dB or louder for long periods of time will eventually cause hearing loss in some cases tinnitus as well. Below are common sounds, their dB level and the risk of hearing damage.



Things to watch for when listening to noises that are too loud include:

- You can't hear someone who is standing 3 feet away
- You have pain in your ears after leaving a noise area.
- You hear a ringing or buzzing sound (also known as tinnitus) right after being exposed to noise.
- You can hear people talking but their speech sounds muffled or you can't understand them.
- You have to turn the TV volume up louder to hear it.

Where can I get help?

Audiologists must obtain a doctor of audiology (Au.D.) or other doctoral degree in the hearing and balance sciences. Audiologists must also be licensed or registered by the state in which they practice. Audiologists are trained to evaluate and diagnose hearing loss and balance disorders; to prescribe, fit, verify and validate hearing aids and other amplification and hearing assistance technology; provide hearing rehabilitation training, such as auditory training and listening skills improvement; assess and treat children and adults with auditory processing disorders; assess and treat individuals with tinnitus (noises in the ear, such as ringing; development newborn hearing screening programs and hearing conservation programs; perform ear and hearing related surgical monitoring and participate on cochlear implant teams.