

HEAR CARE

Home Hearing Protection Tips

If you work in a noisy environment, you may be aware of the importance of on-the-job hearing protection. But many workers fail to realize that a safe noise exposure limit doesn't stop when they punch out of work. The best way to protect your hearing on the job is to follow your company's hearing conservation program and to use the hearing protectors your employer provides. To protect your hearing off the job, recognize potential hazards and use ear plugs or muffs when operating loud appliances or tools. "Hear care" means protecting your hearing for life.

Home Hearing Hazards

Many common household appliances can expose you to excessive noise: vacuum or rug shampoo cleaners, garbage disposals, trash compactors, even a noisy blender or mixer. The home workshop can contain several hearing hazards: electric saws, drills, sanders, and other power equipment. Garden tools, such as lawn mowers, leaf or snow blowers, chain saws, chipper/shredders and hedge trimmers, can also expose you to excess noise. Keep a pair of ear muffs or plugs at home and use them when operating noisy tools or appliances.

Recreational Hearing Hazards

Perhaps the most common recreational hearing hazard is listening to overly loud music. The problem

is compounded if you listen to loud music through earphones. To protect your hearing, turn down the volume. Recreational vehicles—motor boats, snowmobiles, motorcycles—can have very loud engines. When operating these vehicles, be sure to wear ear plugs or ear muffs. While hearing loss does result from exposure to excess noise over a period of time, a single exposure to a very loud noise—like gunfire—can cause permanent hearing loss. Always use hearing protection when hunting or target shooting.

Hear Today... And Tomorrow

The best way to protect against hearing loss in the future is to protect your hearing today and every day. Follow your company's hearing conservation program and use hearing protection for off-the-job hearing hazards too. When purchasing new appliances, tools or equipment, select noise-reduced models. A little safety sense can help save one of your most valuable senses—your hearing.

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