

## Loud Noise and Hearing Loss

[www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au](http://www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au)



Musical listening devices that direct noise into your ears can be damaging. **Better Hearing Australia** suggests *'Turn it to the Left'*, turn down the noise level on any device that directs noise into your ears!

**Did you know ...**

Sitting in front of loud speakers can expose you to 120 decibels, which can damage hearing in approximately 7 minutes!

Each day we experience sound, from the radio, household appliances, traffic. Usually we hear these sounds at a safe level that does not affect our hearing, but if exposed to harmful noise—sounds that are too loud or last a long time, sensitive structures in our inner ear can be damaged, causing noise-induced hearing loss. These sensitive structures, called hair cells, are small sensory cells that convert sound energy into electrical signals that travel to the brain. Once damaged, our hair cells cannot grow back.

Sound is measured in units called decibels. On the decibel scale, an increase of 10 means that a sound is 10 times more intense. To your ears, it sounds twice as loud. Normal conversation is about 60 decibels; noise from heavy traffic can reach 85 decibels. Sources of noise above 85 decibels can be from motorcycles, lawnmowers, power tools, fireworks, which can all emit sounds from 120 to 150 decibels. Repeated exposure to sounds at or above 85 decibels can cause hearing loss. The louder the sound, the shorter the time period before this loss can occur. Distance from the source of the sound and length of exposure to the sound, are just as important. Avoid noise that is too loud, too close, or lasts too long.



**Protect your hearing –**

- Be aware of noise sources in your area.
- Be aware of noise levels that damage your hearing.
- Be aware of early indicators of hearing loss.
- Arrange for regular hearing checks.
- Eliminate noisy tasks or find quiet ways of working.
- Use barriers and acoustic treatments if able.
- Conduct noisy work away from other people.
- Wear hearing protection when in noisy environment.