

# Turn Down for What? Protecting Your Hearing in a Loud World

## Summary

Hearing loss isn't just an "old age" problem anymore; it's rising among younger adults due to constant exposure to loud noise, particularly from earbuds and headphones. Noise-induced hearing loss is permanent, but it's also 100% preventable. By following the "60/60 Rule" for headphones and wearing earplugs at concerts or loud events, you can protect your ears for the long haul.

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We often take our hearing for granted—until we notice that ringing sound (tinnitus) or find ourselves constantly asking people to repeat themselves. In today's world, our ears are under constant assault. From construction noise on the street to the podcast blasting in our earbuds, the volume is turned up, and our delicate inner ears are paying the price.

Here is the scary truth: **Noise-induced hearing loss is permanent.** Once the tiny hair cells in your inner ear are damaged, they don't grow back. But the empowering truth? You can prevent it starting right now.

## The Hidden Culprit: Your Headphones

Earbuds and headphones are the biggest risk factor for many of us. We often crank the volume to drown out background noise (like a subway or a busy office).

- **The Golden Rule:** Adopt the **60/60 Rule**. Listen to your music at no more than **60% of the maximum volume** for no more than **60 minutes a day**.
- **Upgrade Your Gear:** Consider investing in **noise-canceling headphones**. By blocking out external noise, they allow you to listen clearly at much lower volumes, saving your ears from unnecessary strain.

## Concerts, Clubs, and Power Tools

You don't have to skip the rock concert or the DIY project to save your hearing; you just need the right armor.

- **High-Fidelity Earplugs:** For concerts, cheap foam plugs muffle the sound. High-fidelity musicians' earplugs (which are quite affordable) lower the *volume* (decibels) without distorting the *quality* of the music. You still hear the band perfectly; it just doesn't hurt.
- **Protective Earmuffs:** If you are using a leaf blower, lawnmower, or power saw, throw on a pair of over-the-ear muffs. If you have to shout to be heard over the noise, it's loud enough to damage your hearing.

Protecting your ears isn't uncool—it's the only way to ensure you can still enjoy your favorite music and conversations decades from now.

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**Sources Cited:**

- National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD). (2024). *Noise-Induced Hearing Loss*.
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2025). *Make Listening Safe*.
- CDC. (n.d.). *Loud Noise Can Cause Hearing Loss*.