
Can Loud Music Hurt My Ears?

Huh? Can you speak up? Oh! You want to know if loud music can hurt your ears. Are you asking because you like to put on your headphones and crank up the volume of your favorite CD? Maybe your mom or dad has told you, "Turn that down before you go deaf!" Well, they have a point. Loud noise (from music or other sources such as machinery or jet engines) **can** cause both temporary and permanent hearing loss.

Hearing loss means someone can't hear as well as other people do. For some people, that means not being able to hear at all.

If the noise around you is so loud that you have to shout to be heard, there is a chance that the mechanism inside your ear can be injured. **Temporary hearing loss** can happen after you've been exposed to loud noise for any duration. If you have temporary hearing loss, you won't be able to hear as well as you normally do for a while. Don't worry, it will go away (usually after a good night's sleep). But it means that the next time you're around loud noise, you should wear protection to avoid permanent hearing loss.

You also could have **tinnitus** (say: **tih**-nih-tus), which is a medical term for ringing in the ears. Your ears can feel "full," too. Although your hearing often returns to normal, the dangerous part is that you can lose it permanently if you listen to loud noise or music over and over again.

If someone is exposed to loud noise over a long period of time, like every day, **permanent hearing loss** can occur. This means the person's hearing won't ever be as good as it once was. That's why construction workers and factory workers need to wear ear protection. Lawn mowers and power tools, like chainsaws, also can be loud enough to affect someone's ability to hear high-pitched noises. This kind of noise also can cause a person to have tinnitus all the time.

Listening to loud music a lot can cause the same kind of damage, especially if headphones or ear buds are used. Some famous musicians have suffered hearing loss and developed tinnitus — a real problem for someone who needs to hear to make and enjoy music. That's why now you might notice that some of your favorite musicians wear hearing protection while they're playing.

You too can help keep your hearing in tip-top shape. Protect your ears by wearing ear protection when you're using machinery, like in metal shop at school. Also remember to turn down the volume, especially when you're wearing headphones or ear buds or in the car. You also might want to give your ears a rest once in a while if you like wearing headphones.

And if you're going to a concert, consider wearing earplugs to protect your ears from the boom, boom, boom! In fact, special earplugs can be made for you if you're going to concerts a lot or if you're a musician yourself. Take these steps now and you won't be saying "What?" later on.

Reviewed by: Thierry Morlet, PhD

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