

Like it loud?

Your ears don't



What do a lawn mower, a motorcycle, and a music player have in common? They can all cause permanent hearing loss.

Many people assume that only extremely loud sounds, such as gunshots, can damage the ears. But any loud noise, such as power tools, headphones turned up too loud, lawn equipment, or a concert, can lead to hearing loss. This is known as noise-induced hearing loss.

Noise-induced hearing loss often happens gradually, so you don't realize the damage that's being done over time. For instance,

being around loud machinery every day or listening to loud music in earphones regularly can cause hearing damage that adds up. The National Institutes of Health states that 26 million Americans between the ages of 20 and 69 have hearing loss caused by excessive noise.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says anything over 85 decibels can damage hearing. The louder it is, the faster it can cause hearing loss if used regularly and/or for long periods. Normal conversation is 60 decibels, and a hair dryer is around 90.

Save your hearing

The best way to prevent noise-induced hearing loss is to avoid loud noises whenever you can. But, this may not be possible if your job requires you to be around certain equipment. If you can't avoid it, always wear proper hearing protection. This includes earplugs and/or ear muffs that have a noise reduction rating (NRR) listed.

If you notice you have trouble hearing, talk to your doctor.