

# MAFES Dawg Tracks

May 21, 2018



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND  
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

Hearing Loss

Have you ever been into someone's house where the television is crazy loud and after about 2 minutes you can't wait to get out of there? You cut your visit short and jump into your car. Even before your seatbelt is on, your stereo is pumping out enough volume to fill a stadium. Ah, good music... What's wrong with this picture?

Many senior aged adults' hearing began deteriorating as a result of aging and occurred gradually, not because of noise exposure. But if you keep abusing your hearing, you'll probably be in the same situation BEFORE your hair turns gray.

The first few times you attended a loud concert, you may have noticed ringing in your ears or felt that it seemed "too quiet" outside afterwards. In reality, the concert caused a temporary threshold shift - a diminished ability to hear for a period following exposure to loud noise. Half an hour later, you probably noticed it was no longer quiet; you regained your full hearing ability. However, with **repeated exposures to noise over 85 decibels** (about as loud as traffic on a busy street), hearing can become permanently damaged. The louder the noise, the sooner damage will occur.

You may protect your hearing on the job, but your ears don't discriminate between a screaming power saw and a screaming concert. Excessive noise of any kind damages hearing.

Media players with "ear-bud"-type headphones can damage your hearing. The old "muff"-type foam headphones of the early disc players left an airspace between the sensitive inner ear and the speaker. But modern earphones fit tightly into the ear canal, sending high-intensity sound directly into the aural chamber. Continuous listening, even at a reasonable volume, can damage delicate inner-ear hair cells. It's recommended a maximum of two hours per day.

## Did You Know?

- Ten percent of the population has a hearing loss affecting the ability to understand what others are saying?
- Normal conversation has a sound pressure level (SPL) of about 60 decibels (dB). A whisper is heard at about 30 dB. A jet taking off at close range can hit 140 dB.
- Loss of high frequency hearing distorts sound, causing people to have trouble distinguishing between similar sounding words such as "stone" and "bone."

## How Can I Protect the Hearing I Have Left?

- Wear foam earplugs when attending off-the-job events such as concerts or car races.
- Never sit near loudspeakers in a club.
- Use hearing protection when operating loud equipment, hand tools, a lawnmower, chainsaw, leaf blower, hunting or target shooting.

## Fitting Instructions for Foam Earplugs

**ROLL & COMPRESS** - With clean hands, hold earplug between thumb and forefinger as shown. Roll and progressively compress the entire tapered end of the earplug to a small wrinkle-free cylinder.

**INSERT** - To ensure fitting, reach hand over head and gently pull ear upward and outward as shown.

Insert compressed, tapered end of earplug well inside ear canal. Hold 30-60 seconds until earplug expands. Release, then push in again for 5 seconds to ensure fit.



**CORRECT FIT** - When properly inserted, the bottom edge of earplug is located at the opening of the ear canal.

For more info contact – Leslie Woolington  
MAFES /MSU-EXTENSION  
Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control  
(662) 325-3204

Sources:  
<http://safetytoolboxtopics.com/Hearing-Conservation/lesson1>  
<http://www.moldex.com/non-product/fit-instructions/hearing/foam-earplug.php>