

## Are you being proactive about your hearing health?

Taking good care of your ears is easier than you might think!



Are you someone who regularly protects your skin from UV damage, never leaves the house without sunglasses on, always wears a helmet, and makes sure to buy shoes with proper arch support – but routinely forgets to think about hearing and ear protection? If so, your ears might have a bone to pick with you.

And they'd be justified.

One in three adults over the age of 65 has some degree of hearing loss, so being proactive about your health should always include your hearing health, particularly as you age.

After all, not only does hearing well help to keep us connected to the people and places around us in important and meaningful ways, but it can also reduce your risk of falls, make you feel safer when you're out and about, and even ensure that you have more energy to enjoy the things you love.

It just makes sense to make your ears a priority too.

If your hearing health isn't something you've paid much attention to in the past, remember that while hearing loss can be temporary depending upon the cause, damage can also be permanent. It's time to start thinking about how and when to protect your ears so you can preserve your hearing before it's too late.

Some factors that contribute to hearing loss may be out of your control – certain health conditions, like heart disease and diabetes; some medications; genetics; and continuous exposure to loud noises at your workplace can all contribute to hearing loss 1 – but there are simple things you can do to help preserve your hearing and protect the health of your ears as you age.

It's easy to make your hearing a priority – and you can start today!

How can I reduce the risk of hearing loss and keep my ears healthy?

- Sounds are considered harmful when they exceed 85 decibels (dB), and there are a lot of everyday sounds that fall into that category. A normal conversation is about 60 dB, but a busy street can be 75-85 dB, a lawn mower 90dB, music on a smartphone 112 dB, and a rock concert a whopping 120 dB. If you're going to be in a noisy environment like a concert or a workplace where you're near heavy machinery, always wear earplugs or noise cancelling headphones.
- When you're using earphones or earbuds to listen to music or podcasts, make sure you have the volume set at a safe level. Don't turn the sound up past 60% of the maximum volume of the audio device you're listening to.
- Give your ears a break as often as you can. Move away from noisy environments and try to avoid being in noisy places for more than an hour if possible.
- Keep your ears as dry as possible by wear well-fitting earplugs and a swim cap when swimming. If you do get water in your ears, gently towel dry then tilt your head from side to side to let it run out. This will help prevent swimmer's ear, an infection of the ear canal caused by water entering the ear and creating a warm, moist environment that allows bacteria or fungi to thrive.
- Be careful when you clean your ears. Don't insert a cotton swab into your ear canal, as this can cause damage to your ears and compact any wax. Just use the swab or a damp cloth to clean the outside of your ear and leave any inner-ear maintenance to the professionals.

In fact, one of the most important things you can do for your ears is to schedule an appointment with a hearing healthcare professional, especially if there any changes in your ability to hear.

If you've noticed that conversations seem muffled, you can't hear higher pitched sounds, men's voices are easier to hear than women's, or you have ringing in your ears, you might be one of the one in three adults affected by age-related hearing loss. Give your ears some love and book a free hearing comprehensive hearing test at a HearingLife clinic near you.

HearingLife forms the largest network of hearing clinics with over 400 network clinics across Canada. Staffed by certified hearing healthcare professionals, HearingLife offers the most advanced hearing aid technology and up-to-date diagnostic equipment, as well as clinical support and exclusive 360-AfterCare. #LoveYourEars by visiting [HearingLifeAdvantage.ca](https://www.hearinglife.ca) to book your free appointment today. OFA Members and family receive exclusive benefits including an EXTRA 10% off the final purchase price of hearing aids and custom noise protection.

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1 <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/presbycusis>