

# rejuvenate

MIND • BODY • SOUL

ADVERTISING FEATURE

## how loud is too loud?

"PEOPLE find it difficult to believe that listening to music could be hurting them permanently," says Bruce Allen of Allen-Fisher Acoustics.

Whether it be listening to rock music or playing in a symphony orchestra, subjecting your ear drums to more than 80 decibels on a regular basis will result in a permanent hearing loss.

The National Acoustics Laboratories in Sydney conducted a study which found that one quarter of the young people studied



listened to music on their MP3 player at dangerously high volumes.

80 decibels is considered the level at which noise exposure over long periods (8 hours) will result in a loss that requires hearing aids. Exposure to sound over 90 decibels should not go unprotected for more than 15 minutes. Half an hour exposure at 102 decibels will result in hearing loss.

An ordinary conversation is usually recorded at 60 decibels,

a lawn mower is 90 decibels, a jack hammer registers 110 decibels, a rock concert and the brass section of the orchestra can register 120 decibels, and a gunshot 140 decibels.

The difficulty is that most people do not know how loud they are playing music through head phones or the stereo. Some MP3 players can be turned up as high as 130 decibels. At this level, brief amounts of exposure will cause damage.

Music-induced hearing loss is gradual and extremely hard to detect as we adjust ourselves to the change. A review of the relevant literature has found that the incidence of music induced hearing loss was 58% in classical musicians and 30% in pop / rock musicians.

The warning signs that you may be affected by music induced hearing loss are Tinnitus which is ringing or buzzing in the ears and/or Temporary Threshold Shift (TTS) which is when you notice that your hearing seems muffled after exposure to loud music. Both these signal the possibility that you have damaged your hearing and it should be checked.

Bruce Allen recommends some simple strategies to protect your ears.

- Turn down the volume
- Limit the time you listen to your MP3 player to no more than one hour at a time
- Exchange your ear bud head phones for larger over the ear headphones to reduce background noise so you play your music softer.
- If you work with loud music or you play in a band be it classical or rock, invest in musicians' ear plugs which filter the sound and protect your hearing

Allen-Fisher Acoustics, an accredited hearing service has been in Northern Sydney area since 1987 with clinics at Lindfield and Hornsby.

So that you can keep hearing the things and people you love, contact Allen-Fisher Acoustics at Lindfield on 9416 5694 for hearing tests, hearing protection and individual advice.

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