

How Noise Affects Hearing

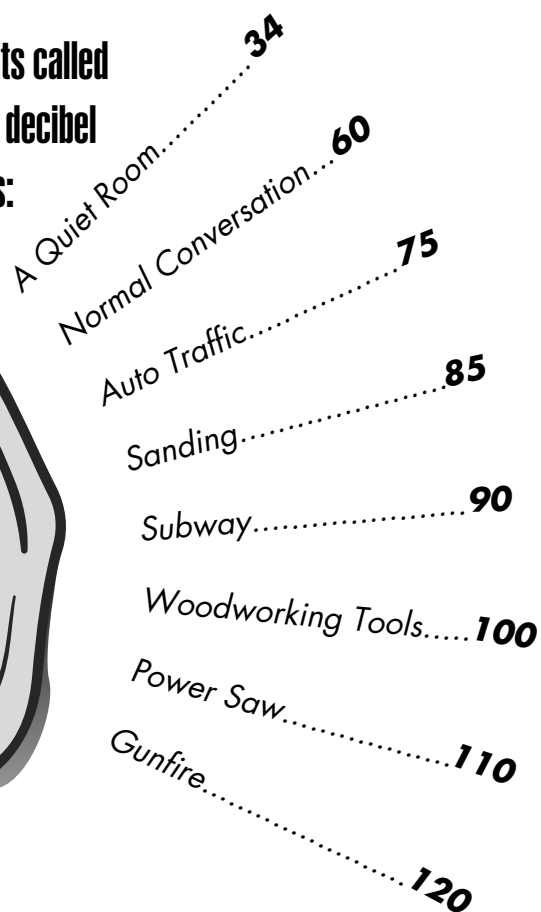
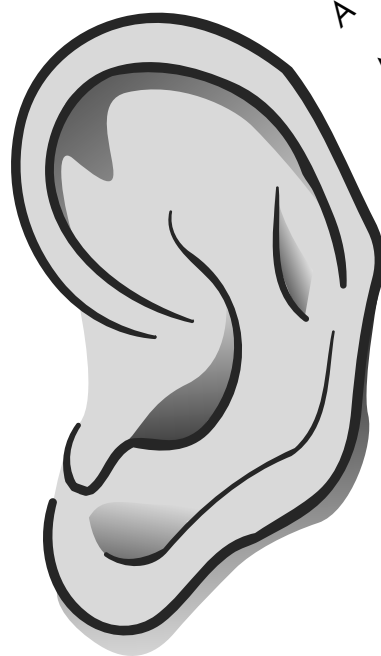
Your ear is a delicate instrument. Tiny “hair cells” in the inner ear vibrate when sounds reach them. Hair cells relay sound to the brain through the auditory nerve.

Loud or frequent noises damage the hair cells. Over time, excessive noise may cause the cells to die. Then the auditory nerve can’t pick up the sound and relay it to the brain.

Very loud noises, such as jet engines and gunfire, can damage hearing very quickly.

Other noises damage only after you’ve been around them for hours. A noise that is 85 decibels won’t hurt you in the short run, but if you’re around it for eight hours or more, you need hearing protection.

Noise is measured in units called decibels. Here are some decibel levels of common noises:



Always wear hearing protection for loud noises such as gunfire or prolonged noises such as shop tools and machinery.

SAFETY HAZARDS