

# Musicians and hearing loss - save your ears for music

Musicians' induced hearing loss is a growing problem.

It is painless, progressive and permanent. You only get one set of ears so look after them.

Musicians suffer from hearing loss, ringing in their ears and various pitch-perception problems where they may want to play a C note but inadvertently play a C sharp note.

Look after your ears so that you can enjoy music for the rest of your life. Some musicians e.g. dedicated violinists have the beginning of hearing loss at the age of 8 years old.

Research has shown that 37% of rock musicians and about 52% of classical musicians have hearing problems.

## What can I do about hearing loss?

- Have a pair of custom made musician's ear plugs. Use them regularly. This will reduce the noise volume but not the quality of the music
- Turn the volume down. Let your PA system carry the load. Keep the stage volume to a minimum level to protect your hearing
- Take frequent breaks during long hours of music playing
- Save your hearing /ears for gigs. Rehearse with moderate volume
- There are several types of acoustic baffles and inexpensive wall and floor coverings that can be used to modify rehearsal rooms. This will let you hear your music at a safe level
- Try reducing your daily noise dosage limit e.g. night club, personal stereo, lawn mowing

- After a loud rehearsal or concert don't practise for 16-18 hours
- Try repositioning the speakers and musicians to reduce the impact of the music

It is important that you get your hearing checked from time to time by an audiologist. Hearing damage occurs gradually. You may miss the symptoms of hearing loss at first.

Pay attention to the warning signs of noise - induced hearing loss. A buzzing or ringing in the ears, a slight muffling of sounds or difficulty understanding speech immediately after exposure to noise.