

Protecting Your Hearing Health

An NASM – PAMA

Student Information Sheet on Noise-Induced Hearing Loss

Hearing health is essential to your lifelong success as a musician.

Your hearing can be permanently damaged by loud sounds, including music. Technically, this is called Noise-Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL). Such danger is constant.

Noise-induced hearing loss is generally preventable. You must avoid overexposure to loud sounds, especially for long periods of time.

The closer you are to the source of a loud sound, the greater the risk of damage to your hearing mechanisms.

Sounds over 85 dB (your typical vacuum cleaner) in intensity pose the greatest risk to your hearing.

Risk of hearing loss is based on a combination of sound or loudness intensity and duration.

Recommended maximum daily exposure times (NIOSH) to sounds at or above 85 dB are as follows:

85 dB (vacuum cleaner, MP3 player at 1/3 volume) – 8 hours

90 dB (blender, hair dryer) – 2 hours

94 dB (MP3 player at 1/2 volume) – 1 hour

100 dB (MP3 player at full volume, lawnmower) – 15 minutes

110 dB (rock concert, power tools) – 2 minutes

120 dB (jet planes at take-off) – without ear protection, sound damage is almost immediate

Certain behaviors (controlling volume levels in practice and rehearsal, avoiding noisy environments,