

# Listen Up! Protect Your Hearing When You're Using Loud Tools.

To protect your hearing when you're using loud tools, use ear protection – and take a break when you can.

It's a loud world out there! And some of us use noisy equipment – like drills or lawn mowers – at home, at a job, or as part of a hobby. But being around too much loud noise can make you lose your hearing – and **once it's gone, you can't get it back.**



## DID YOU KNOW?



Every year, around 22 million workers come in contact with noise loud enough to damage their hearing at a job site.



Nearly half of all construction workers have hearing loss.



Many people don't feel any warning signs (like pain or ringing in their ears) until their hearing is already damaged.

The louder a sound is, and the longer you listen to it, the more it can damage your hearing. It can take as little as 1 minute to permanently damage your hearing if you use these power tools without ear protection:



**Electric drill**  
less than 1 minute



**Chainsaw**  
less than 2 minutes



**Lawn mower**  
15 minutes



**Shop vacuum**  
2 hours

Here's the good news:

**There's a lot you can do to protect your hearing when you're using loud tools.**



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You're already wearing eye protection and sturdy shoes when you work with power tools. So why not protect your hearing too?

## To protect your hearing:



### Use hearing protection.

If you're using a loud tool like a shop vacuum or chainsaw, wear earplugs or a pair of noise-blocking earmuffs. Store your ear protection near your power tools, so it's easier to remember!



### Take breaks when you can.

To give your ears a rest, take breaks from using loud equipment – or take turns with a friend or someone else.



### Move away from loud machines.

If you don't need to be near a noisy piece of machinery, stay away – for example, by choosing a workspace that's on the other side of the shop.



### Maintain your equipment.

To help keep the noise down, make sure your equipment stays in good condition. Replace any worn or loose parts and keep machines well-oiled.



### Choose quieter tools.

Some power tools and equipment are designed to make less noise. Talk to your family or employer about using quieter tools – and learn more from CDC's Buy Quiet program at [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/buyquiet/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/buyquiet/).

**If you're concerned about your hearing, talk to your doctor.**

To learn more about how loud noise can damage your hearing, visit [www.cdc.gov/nceh/hearing\\_loss/](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hearing_loss/)



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