



Information for Musicians

Sound advice

Because of high sound levels and frequent exposure, musicians can develop hearing problems such as tinnitus and hearing loss. The advice which is given, is sometimes along the following lines: "Give up your career or interest and find something quieter to do or "Just keep playing and don't let the tinnitus affect your life".

However, it is often possible to strike a balance between these two views. By using the right kind of hearing protection you can continue with your music, but reduce the sound levels to which you are exposed. Many musicians have taken this option and it seems to be a sensible, practical way of dealing with the problem.

Many musicians want to protect their hearing whilst playing. There are various reasons for this, eg. risk of hearing damage, temporary post-exposure tinnitus, loudness discomfort.

A wide range of technical ear protection products are available. They tend to be more expensive than devices sold to the general public, but can be looked upon as an investment. A decent amplifier or instrument can cost a considerable amount, so £100 spent on a suitable set of ear plugs designed to protect your ears seems a reasonable investment.

A good source of information for musicians is the US charity HEAR (Hearing Education and Awareness for Rockers). Their advice is helpful for all musicians, not only rockers, and their address is:

HEAR, 50 Oak Street, Suite#101, San Francisco, CA94102. USA
www.hearnet.com

Technical ear plugs

A number of companies manufacture specialist ear plugs and in-the-ear monitors for musicians. These are used by members of the general public too, who wish to reduce sound levels to which they are exposed without having muffled or distorted hearing.

Technical plugs aim to reduce sound levels evenly across all frequencies so that the sound that you hear is natural, but at a lower volume. In addition, they cause less distortion to your own voice. They are tailor made so they fit the individual's own ear perfectly. HEAR, mentioned earlier, provide details of plugs and suppliers in the USA.

In the UK one of the most popular plugs is the ER15, named because it cuts out 15 decibels of sound.

The same plug can be fitted with a 25 decibel filter, to provide higher protection. The ER15 is available from:

ACS Ltd, 129 Southdown Road,
Harpenden, Herts AL5 1PU
Tel: 01582 767 007. Email:
info@hearingprotection.co.uk
Website: www.hearingprotection.co.uk

Puretone Limited, 10 Henley Business
Park, Trident Close, Medway City
Estate, Rochester, Kent, ME2 4FR
Tel: 01634 719 427 Email:
tinnitus@puretone.net Website:
www.puretone.net

Other companies which sell hearing
protection include:

Audio Medical Devices Ltd, 343 Eden
Park Avenue, Beckenham, Kent, BR3
3JN Tel: 020 8663 0163
Email: info@audimed.com
Website: www.audimed.com

For further information on hearing
protection, please see the *BTA's
Suppliers and Contacts sheet.*

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This information is not a substitute for medical advice. You should always see your GP / medical professional

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