

10 Tips for Better Hearing Health at Any Age

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Discover ten practical lifestyle tips to safeguard your hearing health. Your ability to hear plays a crucial role in your daily life, influencing communication, enjoyment of sounds, and cognitive function. In this article, we'll explore ten practical lifestyle tips that can help you protect and preserve your hearing for years to come. From simple habits like avoiding smoking to proactive measures such as scheduling regular hearing tests, we'll cover everything you need to know to safeguard your auditory health.



Smoking is harmful to your hearing.

1. Don't Smoke

Smoking is harmful to your hearing. Research shows that smokers have a higher risk of developing hearing loss compared to non-smokers. The chemicals in cigarettes can damage the delicate structures of the inner ear, leading to hearing problems. Smoking also restricts blood flow to the ears, contributing to hearing damage over time.

Plus, smokers are more likely to experience tinnitus, a condition characterized by ringing, buzzing, or other phantom sounds in the ears. The nicotine in cigarettes can exacerbate tinnitus symptoms, making it more bothersome for individuals already experiencing this auditory disturbance. By quitting smoking, you can protect your hearing and reduce your risk of developing hearing loss and related conditions like tinnitus.

2. Keep Your Ears Dry

Moisture in the ears can lead to infections and other problems that can affect your hearing health. To keep your ears dry, avoid swimming in dirty water and always wear earplugs or a swim cap when swimming to prevent water from entering the ear canal. After swimming or showering, tilt your head to each side to help excess water drain out. You can also gently dry your ears with a soft towel or use a hairdryer on a low setting, held at arm's length, to evaporate any remaining moisture. By keeping your ears dry, you can reduce your risk of developing infections and other issues that can impact your hearing.

3. Be Aware of the Side Effects of Your Medication

Certain medications, including some antibiotics, diuretics, and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), can have side effects that affect your hearing health.



These side effects may include temporary or permanent hearing loss, tinnitus (ringing in the ears), or dizziness. It's essential to be aware of the potential side effects of any medications you're taking and to discuss them with your healthcare provider. If you experience any changes in your hearing while taking medication, such as sudden hearing loss or ringing in the ears, notify your doctor immediately. Always follow the prescribed dosage instructions for your medication and never exceed the recommended dose. Your healthcare provider can help you find alternative medications or adjust your dosage if necessary to protect your hearing health.

4. Use Proper Hearing Protection

Everyday sounds, such as blow-drying your hair, listening to loud music, or using power tools, can contribute to hearing damage over time. To protect your hearing, it's essential to use proper hearing protection, such as earplugs or earmuffs, when exposed to loud noises.

Whether you're attending a concert, mowing the lawn, or working in a noisy environment, wearing hearing protection can help prevent noise-induced hearing loss. Invest in high-quality earplugs or earmuffs designed to reduce noise levels while still allowing you to hear essential sounds. By taking proactive steps to protect your hearing, you can preserve your auditory health and enjoy clearer hearing for years to come.

5. Get Moving

Regular exercise not only benefits your overall health but can also contribute to better hearing health. Physical activity improves blood circulation, including to the ears, which helps to keep the delicate structures of the inner ear nourished and functioning optimally. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise most days of the week. Activities like walking, swimming, cycling, and dancing are excellent choices that can help improve circulation and support healthy hearing. Additionally, maintaining a healthy weight through regular exercise can reduce the risk of conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure, which are associated with hearing loss. So lace up your sneakers, hit the gym, or enjoy outdoor activities to not only boost your fitness but also promote better hearing health.

6. Schedule a Hearing Test

Regular hearing tests are essential for monitoring your auditory health and catching any potential issues early. Adults should ideally have their hearing checked at least once every three years, especially if they haven't experienced any noticeable changes in their hearing. However, if you're over the age of 50 or have been exposed to loud noise regularly, annual hearing screenings are recommended. Hearing tests can detect changes in your hearing abilities and identify any signs of hearing loss or other auditory issues. Early detection allows for prompt intervention and treatment, which can help preserve your hearing and prevent further damage. So don't wait until you notice a problem – schedule a hearing test today and make it a regular part of your healthcare routine.



7. Make Sure You're Getting the Right Vitamins and Minerals

A balanced diet plays a crucial role in maintaining overall health, including your hearing health. Certain vitamins and minerals are particularly important for supporting auditory function and protecting against hearing loss. Vitamin C, vitamin E, magnesium, zinc, and folate are all known for their antioxidant properties, which help protect the delicate structures of the inner ear from damage caused by free radicals. Foods rich in these nutrients include citrus fruits, leafy greens, nuts, seeds, whole grains, and legumes. Omega-3 fatty acids, found in fatty fish like salmon and tuna, have also been linked to improved hearing health. Additionally, maintaining adequate levels of vitamin D is essential, as vitamin D deficiency has been associated with an increased risk of hearing loss. Incorporating a variety of nutrient-rich foods into your diet can help ensure that you're getting the vitamins and minerals your ears need to stay healthy and functioning optimally.

8. Do Listening Exercises

Just like any other muscle or skill, your auditory system can benefit from regular exercise. Listening exercises can help improve your ability to focus on and locate sounds, which is essential for effective communication in noisy environments. One common listening exercise involves focusing on specific sounds in your environment and trying to locate their source. For example, you could close your eyes and listen for the sound of birds chirping outside or try to identify the direction of a passing car. Another effective exercise is practicing active listening during conversations, where you focus your attention fully on the speaker and work on filtering out background noise. These exercises can help sharpen your auditory skills and enhance your ability to hear and understand speech, even in challenging listening situations.

9. Check for Ear Wax

Ear wax, also known as cerumen, is a natural substance produced by the glands in your ear canal. While ear wax serves a protective function by trapping dust and debris, too much of it can lead to hearing problems. Excessive ear wax buildup can block the ear canal, causing temporary hearing loss or discomfort. To maintain optimal hearing health, it's essential to check for and remove excess ear wax regularly. You can do this by gently cleaning the outer ear with a damp cloth and avoiding the use of cotton swabs, which can push wax deeper into the ear canal. If you experience symptoms like ear pain, itching, or hearing loss, consult a healthcare professional for safe and effective ear wax removal.

10. Keep the Volume Down

Exposure to loud noises can damage the delicate structures of the inner ear and lead to hearing loss over time. To protect your hearing health, it's essential to keep the volume down on personal audio devices like smartphones, tablets, and MP3 players.

Listening to music or podcasts at a moderate volume and taking regular breaks can help prevent noise-induced hearing damage. Additionally, when watching TV or movies, consider using captions or subtitles to follow along with the dialogue without having to turn up the volume. This not only protects your hearing but also enhances your overall viewing experience, ensuring that you don't miss any important details.





Conclusion

Incorporating these tips into your daily routine can go a long way in safeguarding your hearing health. By being mindful of your environment, protecting your ears from loud noises, and prioritizing regular check-ups, you can take proactive steps to preserve your hearing for years to come.

Whether it's preventing hearing loss or preserving and caring for our residual hearing, these simple adjustments can make a significant difference. Remember, it's never too late to prioritize your hearing health, and by taking proactive steps, we can protect our hearing at any age. Let's commit to these habits to ensure a lifetime of healthy hearing.