

Hearing loss prevention for musicians

1. Don't get too close to the speaker or the band

The closer you are, the louder the noise reaching your ears. This could result in permanent tinnitus (ringing in the ears) or premature hearing loss. The risk of damage is determined by how loud the music is, how long you are exposed to it, and your susceptibility to noise.

2. Take breaks when performing

Regular breaks from playing music will give your ears a rest. The longer you and your audience are exposed to loud music, the greater the risk of hearing damage.

3. Wear earplugs

The best way to protect your hearing is to use earplugs that are designed for listening to music. These do not muffle the sound but just reduce the volume. There are lots of different earplugs available, ranging from the inexpensive to the custom-made.

Advice when performing

1. Be aware of the hearing ability and accessibility requirements of your audience

When you are offering live music, be aware of who in the group is wearing a hearing aid and where the best position for them to sit in will be. Have the care homes staff checked that hearing aids are in full working order? Ensure that the listening equipment for hearing aid users is set up correctly and switched on, and that people benefitting from it are in the right position to do so.

2. Make sure there is enough space between your band/performers and the audience

If audience members are seated too close to you when you are playing loud music, they may experience tinnitus (ringing in the ears) or hearing loss if exposed to loud levels of music over time. Sitting too close to your instruments or speakers increases the risk of hearing damage, as people are more exposed to high noise levels.

If someone appears to react sensitively to sounds, they may wish to move further away from the music. Ask care staff if they know of any residents that react sensitively sounds.

Consider the length of time within the session and whether you may need to include some time for a short break. Take time to reflect on the session and make any changes if people seem uncomfortable.

3. Offer earplugs to everybody

Raise awareness of the importance of hearing protection when exposed to loud music, as some people will not consider the risk until it's too late. Hand out free earplugs, so that everybody has a choice to protect their hearing.

4. Create an open and accepting environment

Every audience member is different. Encourage an open culture in the room where your audience feel welcome to interact, react and participate with the performance and each other if they want to.

For more information about being a musician and looking after your hearing, please visit:

- [Protect Your Hearing – Musicians' Hearing Health Scheme](#)
- [Hearing loss and tinnitus](#)