

K07 Personal Audio Devices and Hearing

February 2010

Intro: Step outside onto any city street and you're likely to see people hooked up to a personal audio device. Every day more and more people are using them. But have you ever wondered about the impact these music players have on hearing? Experts at Mayo Clinic want to make sure you know where to set the volume so you can avoid any hearing damage.

Video

Audio

Total running time 1:46

THEY'RE EVERYWHERE. (MUSIC)

PERSONAL AUDIO DEVICES.

MILLIONS ARE PLUGGED IN. BUT

CAN THEY HURT YOUR HEARING?

Linsey Wagner, Au.D.

"THERE CERTAINLY ARE LEVELS

Mayo Clinic

THAT ARE SAFE FOR LONG

PERIODS OF TIME, BUT THAT CAN

QUICKLY CHANGE AS THE LEVEL

GOES UP."

MAYO CLINIC AUDIOLOGIST LINSEY

WAGNER TESTS PERSONAL AUDIO

DEVICE VOLUME LEVELS IN HER

OFFICE SO PEOPLE CAN BE SURE

THE LEVELS ARE SAFE.

"THIS MIGHT TICKLE A LITTLE BIT."

DR. WAGNER IS CONCERNED

Linsey Wagner, Au.D.
Mayo Clinic

ABOUT TWO THINGS: HOW LOUD
THE VOLUME IS,

“IT’S PRETTY LOUD.”

AND HOW LONG YOU LISTEN AT
THAT LEVEL.

“50-PERCENT ON THAT VOLUME
WHEEL, YOU CAN WEAR SAFELY
ALL DAY LONG IF YOU WANTED TO,
BUT IF YOU GO UP TO SAY, 60 TO
70-PERCENT ON YOUR VOLUME
WHEEL, DEPENDING ON THE
SYSTEM YOU’RE USING, MAYBE
YOU’D ONLY BE ABLE TO WEAR
THAT FOR FOUR HOURS.”

THAT’S BECAUSE AS VOLUME
LEVELS GO UP, THE AMOUNT OF
TIME YOU SHOULD WEAR THE
DEVICE GOES DOWN
DRAMATICALLY. THIS READING
SHOWS AN AVERAGE VOLUME OF
97 DECIBELS.

Standup
Vivien Williams
Reporting

“SHE CAN WEAR THAT FOR ONLY ABOUT 30 MINUTES BEFORE PUTTING HER HEARING AT RISK.”

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR EARS IS THIS: MUSIC GOES IN THROUGH THE EAR DRUM TO THE MIDDLE EAR BONES AND THEN TO THE INNER EAR, WHICH IS LINED WITH TINY HAIR CELLS. LOUD MUSIC CAN DAMAGE THOSE HAIR CELLS, CAUSING HEARING LOSS. SO IF YOUR EARS HURT OR RING, IT MEANS YOUR HEARING IS A RISK. DAMAGE COULD BE TEMPORARY BUT IF YOU LISTEN TO LOUD LEVELS FOR TOO LONG, THE DAMAGE COULD BE PERMANENT.

“IN MOST CASES IT WON’T MAKE YOU GO COMPLETELY DEAF.”

BUT IT COULD MAKE SOME VOICES AND SOUNDS HARD TO HEAR.

THE BOTTOM LINE? BE AWARE OF HOW LOUD YOUR VOLUME SETTING

IS. AND IF YOU'RE CONCERNED,
SEE AN AUDIOLOGIST TO HELP YOU
SET SAFE LEVELS. FOR MEDICAL
EDGE, I'M VIVIEN WILLIAMS.

Anchor tag:

Be careful in places like the gym where there's a lot of background noise. If you crank it to drown out that noise, you could be setting levels that are dangerous to your hearing.

Linsey Wagner says personal audio devices are safe. As long as you set the levels correctly.

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