



- 10 dB: Normal breathing
- 20 dB: Whispering from five feet away
- 30 dB: Whispering nearby
- 40 dB: Quiet library sounds
- 50 dB: Refrigerator
- 60 dB: Electric toothbrush
- 70 dB: Washing machine
- 80 dB: Alarm clock
- 90 dB: Subway train
- 100 dB: Factory machinery
- 110 dB: Car horn
- 120 dB: Ambulance siren

How loud is too loud?

Continued exposure to noise above 85 dBA (adjusted decibels) over time will cause hearing loss. The volume (dBA) and the length of exposure to the sound will tell you how harmful the noise is. In general, the louder the noise, the less time required before hearing loss will occur.

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the maximum exposure time at 85 dBA is eight hours. At 110 dBA, the maximum exposure time is one minute and 29 seconds. If you must be exposed to noise, it is recommended that you limit the exposure time and/or wear hearing protection. A three dBA increase doubles the amount of noise, and halves the recommended amount of exposure time.