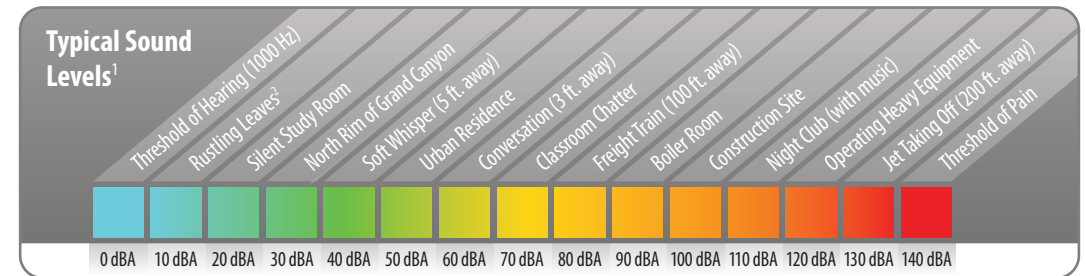


4 Degrees of Hearing Loss

“Do I have hearing loss?”

It’s a question most of us will likely have in our lives, particularly as we age or spend considerable time in very loud environments. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL) is 90 dBA for an 8-hour day, with a 5 dBA exchange rate.¹ This means when the noise level is increased by 5 dBA, the amount of time a person can be exposed to a certain noise level to receive the same dose is cut in half.¹

Hearing loss can impact people of any age. If someone finds themselves struggling with their hearing, the next question is, “how significant is it?”



Ask your hearing healthcare professional about what solutions may help mitigate your hearing loss, so you can stay connected with what’s most important in life.

4 Degrees of Hearing Loss

1 Mild: 26-39 dBA⁴

Impacts ability to:

- Engage in a whispered conversation²
- Focus on a conversation in an environment with significant background noise⁴
- Discern certain consonant sounds at the end of spoken words, like “clues” or “unleash”³

2 Moderate: 40-69 dBA⁴

Impacts ability to:³

- Follow conversations even in quiet environments
- Difficulty understanding speech spoken by women and children (represents higher frequency hearing loss which is most common at this degree)
- Hear the ringing of a doorbell or telephone

3 Severe: 70-94 dBA⁴

Impacts ability to:

- Hear most sounds without a hearing aid (even in quiet environments)³
- Have telephone conversations – talking on the phone is extremely difficult or even impossible.⁵

4 Profound: >95 dBA⁴

Impacts ability to:

- Experience any benefit from a hearing aid
- Hear very loud sounds like sirens or an airplane
- Communicate effectively without sign language, reading lips or other assistance

1

mild

2

moderate

3

severe

4

profound

¹ Occupational Safety and Health Administration, “Occupational Noise Exposure,” Dept. of Labor, OSHA.gov/SLTC/noisehearingconservation

² Debbie Clason, “Living with Mild Hearing Loss,” HealthyHearing.com, 2019, healthyhearing.com/report/7733-Living-with-mild-hearing

³ Joy Victory, “Hearing Loss Symptoms,” HealthyHearing.com, 2019, healthyhearing.com/help/hearing-loss/symptoms

⁴ Debbie Clason, “From mild to profound: Understanding the degrees of hearing loss,” HealthyHearing.com, 2015, healthyhearing.com/report/41775-Degrees-of-hearing-loss

⁵ “Severe to Profound Hearing Loss,” Resound.com, Oct. 2017, resound.com/en-us/hearing-loss/severe-profound