

How to Correctly Use Earplugs

Earplugs are a great way to help protect against loud noises that are present in our daily environments. Regardless of whether you use foam, custom molded, or pre-molded ear plugs, these guidelines can help you understand the correct way to use earplugs.

Clean or Discard Them Daily

Overused and uncleaned earplugs are susceptible to bacteria and can introduce dirt into the ear canal. In addition, earwax can cause molded and pre-molded earplugs to become rigid, putting strain on the ear canal. Discard foam earplugs daily and clean pre-molded or molded earplugs every day with a toothbrush and a mixture of hydrogen peroxide, soap and water.

Insert Plugs Properly

Earplugs that are improperly inserted can't do their job properly. There are three rules to properly inserting foam earplugs:

1. Roll the earplug.
2. Pull to open the ear. You should pull up and away on the top of your ear with the opposite hand so the earplug can slide in easily.
3. Hold the earplug after inserting it until it expands within the ear.

Use the Right Kind of Earplug

Foam, silicone, custom, Hi-fi, wax, vented, and non-vented are all types of earplugs available today. The kind of earplug you use depends in large part on where or how you will be using it. If you are a worker that encounters daily exposure to loud sounds, you probably want to invest in custom earplugs. If using earplugs for swimming or surfing, make sure that they are waterproof - either silicone or wax. Hi-fi earplugs are custom made for musicians, allowing them to hear while protecting their hearing.

Don't Believe the Rating

Noise reduction rating (NRR) is a measurement of how well earplugs block sound. The highest NRR is 33 and it's important to determine how much protection a specific earplug provides. For example, the CDC suggests dividing the NRR by 2 for earplugs. So if the package says 33, you can expect protection closer to 16 decibels. This is why someone who is exposed to very loud noises every day should visit a hearing healthcare professional to obtain custom earplugs in order to achieve the highest level of protection possible.

Allow us to help you identify which type of hearing protection is best for your listening environments and activities, or to schedule a hearing screening for yourself or a loved one, click the button below to fill out our online contact form or call us at [PHONE NUMBER] today!