



What You Can Do About Ringing in the Ears

You might have noticed that your ears ring loudly after you come home from a concert, or use power tools, or spend any amount of time in a noisy environment. If you're lucky, the ringing – called *tinnitus* – goes away within an hour or two.

For 40 million Americans who experience tinnitus, the noise they hear is only occasional and a mere annoyance. But for 10 million Americans, the tinnitus stays – excruciatingly loud – all day, every day. It creates anxiety and depression, and interferes with sleep, work, school, relationships, and life in general.

Tinnitus is any internal sound you hear that has no outside source. Most people describe their tinnitus as a ringing sound. But others hear roaring, hissing, screeching, buzzing, clicking, pulsing, chirping, or multiple sounds combined.

The most commonly known cause of tinnitus (and hearing loss) is either hearing a one-time blast of very loud sound or repeated exposure to loud noise.

If you don't have tinnitus, do what you can to keep it that way! If the noise where you are is too loud, walk away from it, turn it down, or wear earplugs – and make sure they're in deep enough.

Wear protective earmuffs AND earplugs if you're in an especially noisy place. Where is it too noisy? Anywhere you can't hear a conversation with someone who's standing three feet away from you.

American Tinnitus Association. 2008.

Contact the American Tinnitus Association for more information or to find a tinnitus support group near you: www.ata.org



Protect Your Bones!

Nearly 1 in 2 women and 1 in 4 men over age 50 will break a bone in their lifetime due to osteoporosis. If bones don't receive what they need to remain strong, gender doesn't matter. Here are some things you can do to improve your bone strength.

- Avoid smoking.
- Limit your alcohol intake.
- Be physically active on most days of the week.
- Make sure your daily calcium intake is adequate for your age.
- Get enough vitamin D. Your body is efficient in making vitamin D when exposed to sunlight. Aim for 2 sessions (at least an hour apart) of 10-15 minutes in the open sun daily. If you live in Northern regions, consider taking an 800-1,000 IU vitamin D supplement daily.
- Engage in regular weight-bearing exercises, where your bones and muscles work against gravity. This includes walking, jogging, racquet sports, stair climbing, team sports, weight lifting, and using resistance machines. A doctor should evaluate the exercise program of anyone already diagnosed with osteoporosis to determine if twisting motions and impact activities – such as those in golf, tennis, or basketball – need to be curtailed.
- Talk with your doctor about any risk factors you might have (see sidebar).

National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases. 2008.

Life Stage	Recommended Calcium Intake
Teens	1,300 mg/day
20-50 years	1,000 mg/day
51+ years	1,200 mg/day

Good Sources of Calcium

Milk and other dairy products contain calcium. Calcium can also be found in dark green leafy vegetables, such as kale and collard greens, and in dried beans and legumes. You can also buy calcium-fortified, ready-to-eat breakfast cereal, orange juice, or soy milk.

Osteoporosis and Fractures

Factors that <i>increase</i> the risk	Factors that <i>lower</i> the risk
Increasing age, especially after menopause in women	Adequate calcium
Sedentary lifestyle	Weight-bearing exercises
Being underweight	Eating more soy foods may be helpful
High blood pressure	Adequate vitamin K
High sodium (salt) in the diet	Adequate vitamin B-12
Caffeinated beverages	Adequate vitamin D
Smoking	Diet high in fruits and vegetables and plant proteins
High levels of vitamin A (greater than 2,000 ug/day)	Certain medications are available that help improve bone health
Diet high in meat (animal protein)	Sunshine daily
Certain medications, such as long-term steroid use, certain blood thinners, diuretics, etc.	
Depression	
High alcohol intake	

How to Prevent Skin Cancer

Each year, about a million Americans learn that they have skin cancer. It is the most commonly occurring cancer in the United States. UV rays can reflect off virtually any surface, including sand, water, concrete, snow, and ice. It can also penetrate light clothing, windshields, windows, and clouds. To protect yourself:

- **Stay out of the midday sun.** If your shadow is shorter than you are, you're likely to burn.
- **Wear a loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirt and long pants.** A tightly woven fabric offers the best protection. If that's not practical, wear at least a dark colored t-shirt or beach cover-up.

- **Wear a wide-brimmed canvas hat** to protect your ears and neck. Avoid straw hats with holes that let sunlight – and UV rays – through.
- **Stay dry.** A wet, light-colored T-shirt offers little more UV protection than wearing no shirt at all.
- **Wear sunglasses** that provide 100 percent UV protection for your eyes – also vulnerable to UV radiation. Wrap-around lenses work the best, because they keep the sun's rays from sneaking in from the side or from behind your glasses.
- Whenever you're outside, **wear a broad-spectrum UV lip balm** and sunscreen with at least SPF 15 that

blocks both UVA and UVB rays. Apply it 30 minutes prior to sun exposure, and reapply it every 2-3 hours when in the sun.

- **Seek shade** whenever possible – before you need relief from the sun.
- **Stay away from tanning beds** and sunlamps.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2008.



Recognize the Cycle of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence, also called *intimate partner violence* (IPV), is abuse that occurs between two people in a close relationship and can include physical, sexual, or emotional abuse – or threats of abuse. Often, the abuser uses a combination of tactics to maintain power and control over his or her partner. There is an observable cycle to domestic violence.

Phase 1: Tension Building. In this phase, there is escalation in name calling, criticism, harassment, humiliation, and minor physical abuse, such as pushing or slapping.

Phase Two: Battering. In this phase, a major battering incident occurs, usually accompanied by severe verbal abuse and blaming. This phase is usually brief – from a few hours to a few days.

Phase Three: Honeymoon. After the battering, the batterer shows remorse, acts apologetic, and is very loving. The abuser might shower the victim with gifts and promise never, ever to hurt him or her again. The victim might believe that the abuser will truly change.

IPV can affect health in many ways. The longer the abuse goes on, the more serious the effects are on the victim. Often, there are physical injuries. Most often, there are emotional scars. Victims are more likely to have low

self-esteem, suffer from eating disorders and depression, smoke, abuse alcohol, use drugs, and engage in risky sexual activity.

If you are abused, don't blame yourself; it is not your fault. If someone you know has been or is being abused, take action. Contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233), 1-800-787-3224 TTY, or www.ndvh.org.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. 2008.



Early warning signs for physical violence

- Extreme jealousy
- Controlling behavior
- Verbal threats
- History of violent tendencies or abusing others
- Verbal or emotional abuse (criticism, humiliation, name calling, etc.)

ASK THE WELLNESS DOCTOR

Q: Eggs are a traditional part of the diet in most cultures throughout the world, but are they good for you?

A: The best way to determine if eggs are good for you or not is to study egg consumption in large numbers of people, follow them for many years, and see if it affects their health. Go to wellsourc.info/wn/ask-eggs.pdf to read the entire answer from Don Hall, DrPH.