

Five Easy Actions

From p.88, Chapter 16

Various factors contribute to NIHL (Noise Induced Hearing Loss): the actual ear-level sound intensity, our proximity to the noise source, and the length of exposure. Basically, there are five easy things that we can do in order to protect our hearing from decibel assaults:

- We can turn down the volume or ask for the volume to be turned down.
- If that is not an option, we can put some distance between ourselves and the noise source by seeking out a quieter corner away from the loudspeakers.
- We can leave the situation altogether, which is probably the smarter choice.
- We can limit our exposure time—the shorter the better. The danger is that the longer we contemplate our options, the more our brain adapts and the more we lean toward suppressing our gut feeling that told us to get out of there in the first place.
- The most important step we can take to stay at least reasonably safe is to use appropriate ear protection—earplugs or headphones, preferably the noise-reducing kind. However, we must act fast. On that notorious day, I eventually found some earplugs and used them but under the circumstances, I had probably waited too long.

Feelings And Emotions

From p.281, Chapter 40

When I was first sidelined by hearing loss and tinnitus, I had no idea that a wild emotional roller coaster was awaiting me. Too much happened all at once—too much loss, too much change, and too many questions without satisfactory answers. Along with the trepidations that came with all the medical investigations, I felt buried under an avalanche of feelings, none of them good or helpful. In the end, the clinical mysteries turned out to be the more manageable part of the whole experience.

Whether it strikes suddenly or progresses stealthily and slowly, the emotional consequences of hearing loss and accompanying challenges can be overwhelming. Life is no longer the same, and lifestyle changes and adaptations are in order. Mostly, though, along with fading hearing come serious communication challenges that tempt people to curtail their interactions with others—and that can be a set-up for social isolation, lonesomeness, and ultimately, depression.

Glossary And Index

From p.346

Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo: BPPV; an inner-ear condition that causes dizziness.

(See chapters 4, 20; Pp. 9, 111-112, 318, 328)

Benzodiazepines or Benzos: class of medications used mostly for their tranquilizing and anti-anxiety effect; also stabilize the vestibular (balance) system.

(See chapter 27; Pp.178-181, 333)

Bone-Anchored Hearing Aid: BAHA; a hearing system that transmits sound vibrations to the inner ear by means of an implanted titanium stud.

(See chapter 39; Pp. 273-277, 337, 342- 343)

Bone Conduction: transmission of sound vibrations to the cochlea by the skull and jaw bones.

(See chapters 12, 13, 29, 31, 39; Pp. 52-56, 61, 67-68, 73, 204, 210, 224, 225, 273, 276-277, 339, 343)

BTE: behind-the-ear hearing aid.

(See chapter 30; Pp. 210-212)

Checklists

From p.300

Checklists:

1. Preparing for a Primary Care Physician Appointment Regarding Hearing Loss
2. Preparing for Hearing Tests
3. Preparing for an Ear Specialist Appointment
4. Selecting a Hearing Aid Vendor
5. Buying a Hearing Aid
6. Buying a Hearing Aid: The T-coil
7. Preparing for a Doctor Appointment Regarding Tinnitus
8. Preparing for an Audiologist Appointment Regarding Tinnitus Treatment
9. Selected Information Websites (in alphabetical order)