



## Noise-Induced Hearing Loss and Tinnitus: Twelve Ways to Bring Prevention to Your Practice

Would you like to bring the message of hearing loss prevention to your community? Listed below are twelve ideas to help you get started.

1. Update your business website to include information about noise-induced hearing loss and tinnitus and the importance of prevention and the three easy ways it can be done: "Turn it down, walk away, and wear hearing protection". Be sure to include information about various types of hearing protection and actively promote custom earplugs for workers and musicians, and earplugs for music lovers.
2. Offer to write a general interest article for your local newspaper or parenting magazine about hearing and noise-induced hearing loss prevention.
3. During the holiday season, offer to write an article for your local newspaper about noisy toys and the potential dangers they pose for children. Include recommendations for some 'hearing friendly' alternate gift choices that encourage creativity and are relatively quiet, such as arts and crafts, books, puzzles and games, etc.
4. Host a 'Hearing Appreciation' seminar at your local library aimed at the age group of your choice to educate parents, kids, and adults about how amazing their sense of hearing is, how the ears work and some of the wonderful things they can do. Explain how their ears can be damaged and how easy it is to protect them. Include information about tinnitus, which is often a consequence of noise-induced hearing loss.
5. Offer to speak to a group of Boy Scouts, Girl Guides or 4-H Club members about their hearing. Bring along some simple tools (tuning forks, sound level meters) and walk them through some easy physics experiments to show them what sound is, how it is made, and how it is measured. Explain to them how it can damage the structures in the inner ear. Show them pictures of normal versus damaged hair cells. Teach them how they can protect their hearing from dangerously loud sounds.
6. Volunteer to talk to a music class in your community about sound, music, loudness, and tinnitus. Talk to them about how the potential for exposure to loud music over time may become an 'occupational hazard'. It is a perfect opportunity to share information about musician's earplugs and why they are so effective. Be sure to visit [www.aearo.com/hearingconservation/audio\\_main.cfm](http://www.aearo.com/hearingconservation/audio_main.cfm) and share Elliott Berger's sound demonstrations so the students can hear the differences between various types of ear plugs.



7. Offer to give a talk at your child's school. Students at any age are interested in learning about their bodies. You can teach them about the importance of their hearing and how to protect it. If you are speaking to elementary age students, you have a very good chance at getting them to change their attitudes and behaviors to actually protect their hearing.
8. Volunteer to screen the hearing of a specific 'at risk' group, such as the students of one of the music or industrial arts classes at your local high school. Open your office on a Saturday and spend a couple of hours giving your professional time and expertise to educate and inform the students and their parents.
9. Volunteer to give a talk to the teachers at your local school board during one of their "Professional Development" days. You can teach them about noise-induced hearing loss and tinnitus in children and how they can help children learn to protect their hearing. The teachers are often curious and have questions about their own experiences with noise exposure and tinnitus. Like the kids and teens, many of them are attending loud concerts or listening to their personal stereos at excessive volume levels regularly, such as when they go to the gym to work out.
10. Create handouts with relevant information about the hazards of loud sounds/music. Be sure to include your business contact information so you can be contacted if there are further questions. These can be distributed whenever you are out in your community actively promoting noise-induced hearing loss and tinnitus prevention.
11. Get familiar with your local media and let them know what activities you are offering in your community. Invite them to attend and write about your activities in the local paper, as a community service piece is always welcome.
12. Don't be shy about sharing your efforts! After you have given a presentation, volunteered your time, or written something that was published, be sure to highlight these activities in your office and on your website. Laminate a copy of the good press you have received and place it on display in your office. Post links in the "News" section of your website. Your patients will be interested to know you are involved in the community as an advocate for the prevention of unnecessary hearing loss and tinnitus due to noise exposure.

If you would like to link from your website to **Hearing is Precious, or HiP** ([www.widexconnect.ca/hip](http://www.widexconnect.ca/hip)), we invite you to do so. There is a lot of great information that you and your patients may find useful.