

7 rules for hearing survival

Sound Advice · SAMC Sofia, 15 October 2026 · with DJ Kink, Armin & Alen

Your ears are the one instrument you can't replace. Noise damage builds up without pain, and it's permanent. These seven habits keep you playing, mixing and dancing for life.

- 1 Know your numbers**
Every +3 dB halves your safe listening time. Put a free dB meter app on your phone and check your booth.
- 2 Plug in before it rings**
Put your earplugs in at soundcheck, not at peak time. Ringing means the damage has already happened.
- 3 Wear proper music earplugs**
Reusable music earplugs (SNR 24 dB) cut about 22 dB in the bass and mids and more in the harsh highs. You still hear the music, just quieter.
- 4 Monitor down, not master up**
The booth monitor is usually your biggest dose. Keep it as low as you can and point it at your body, not your head.
- 5 Give your ears quiet time**
After a loud night, give your ears a quiet day. Skip the headphones on the way home.
- 6 Ringing for over 24 h? Act**
Ringing that won't go away, or sudden muffled hearing: see an ENT doctor within days. Early treatment matters.
- 7 Test once a year**
Get a hearing test every year. Know your baseline before something changes.

Custom earplugs for your crew?

Personalised or custom-molded earplugs for artists, labels and festivals: alen@ertg.eu

How long is "safe"? (per day)

Busy street	85 dB	8 hours
Rehearsal room	94 dB	1 hour
Club dance floor	100 dB	15 minutes
DJ booth & monitors	106 dB	under 4 minutes
Festival front row	110 dB	under 2 minutes

NIOSH recommended exposure limit: 85 dB for 8 hours, 3 dB exchange rate. Venue levels are typical values.

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