

November 1, 2006
Update to *The Simple Guide...*

At the time *The Simple Guide...* was published, the only real data available regarding mp3 player volume level and actual output into the ears was offered by the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association (ASHA). As with most other areas of health and science, our understanding of this issue is quickly changing and new information is now available.

On October 19, 2006, at the “NIHL in Children at Work and Play” conference, the results of two research studies were released. These studies investigated mp3 usage habits in quiet vs. noisy environments as well as measuring actual output of various mp3 players. What follows are some results of the studies as well as recommended guidelines established by the researchers.

- 1) In noisy environments, the use of sound isolating earphones allow the listener to enjoy their music at softer (and potentially safer) levels (1). This supports the use of earphones such as Shure and Etymotic, with or without custom sleeves.
- 2) Typical individuals can listen to their mp3 players for a total of 1.2 hours a day with the supplied earphones if the volume is at 80% of maximum level; 4.6 hours a day at 70% of the volume; 18 hours a day at 60% of the volume; there is no listening time limit when individuals set their volume 10-50% of maximum. (2)

References

1. “Does earphone type affect risk for recreational noise-induced hearing loss?” Brian J. Fligor, Sc.D., CCC-A and Terri Ives, Sc.D.
2. “Output Levels of Portable Digital Music Players”, Cory D.F. Portnuff and Brian J. Fligor, Sc.D., CCC-A