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Saturday, October 06, 2007

**Jeff Ball: Yardener**

# NoiseBuster protection helps avoid hearing loss

Advertisement



I can now report, after six months of trial, that both of my hearing aids not only work very well, but they have changed my life. I can now understand dialogue at the movies and I've lost the ability to avoid doing chores because I could claim I didn't hear what Nancy said.

I'm wearing hearing aids because just this time of year, many years ago, I ran tons of leaves through my 8-horsepower chipper-shredder and cut wood for the woodstove with my large chainsaw. I did this for a number of years without using any hearing protection. Now I call that just plain stupid. It's embarrassing to think I did something that dumb. And once the damage was done, there was no going back -- the hearing loss is permanent.

Since that time, I have tried to be smart and have worn a pair of passive ear-protecting muffs whenever using any power tool noisier than a power drill. That included lawn mower, shredder, chainsaw, leaf vacuum and leaf blower. Last winter, I learned that I was still not protecting my hearing sufficiently to avoid damage from extended use (more than 30 minutes) of any of those machines. This time I did not feel stupid, just ignorant.

This past season, I have been using a pair of NoiseBuster safety earmuffs ([www.noisebuster.net](http://www.noisebuster.net)) that combine the passive protection of the past with new Active Noise Reduction technology (ANR). These ear protectors have a battery in them that powers a receiver, microphone, and speaker inside the ear cup of the device. When a noise is received by the electronics in that ear cup, it creates an identical noise wave and sends it back out of the speaker, effectively canceling most of the incoming noise.

So now when I'm riding my lawn tractor, the noise of the tractor is greatly reduced, preventing any more damage to my hearing. What is really cool is that this technology works primarily at suppressing the lower sound frequencies, so you can still hear the words when someone speaks to you. On top of all that, there is a plug in the earmuff for hooking up my

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iPod. Now, when I'm doing chores with power tools, I can listen to my favorite rock and roll music, which, come to think of it, might have years ago also contributed to my hearing loss.

By the way, this wonderful gadget works wonders for listening to music on an airplane. The safety muffs cost about \$150, but Pro Tech Communications also sells a cheaper model specifically for you frequent flyers.

*Jeff Ball, a Metro Detroit freelance garden writer, has a yard-care Web site at [www.yardener.com](http://www.yardener.com), and his blog is at [gardener.yardener.blogspot.com](http://gardener.yardener.blogspot.com). E-mail him at [jeffball@usol.com](mailto:jeffball@usol.com).*



noisebuster

**NoiseBuster's Active Noise Reduction system protects ears from loud noises.**

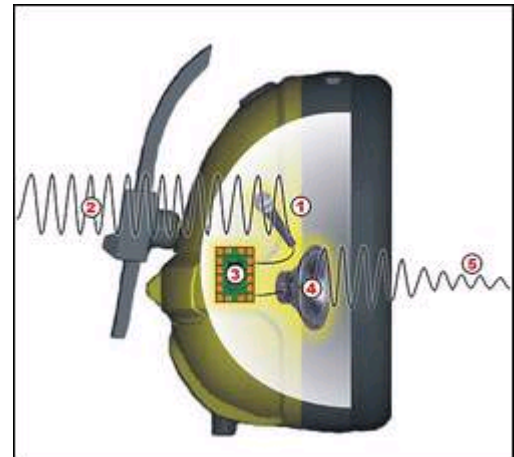
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## What is Active Noise Reduction (ANR)?

ANR system uses a microphone inside the ear cup (1) to listen to noise (2) coming into the ear.

Using electronics (3), the system takes that information and uses it to create a noise wave that is identical to, but directly opposite of, the one coming into the ear.

The "anti-noise" wave is output through a speaker (4), also located in the ear cup. When the two waves (the noise wave and the anti-noise wave) meet, the noise is significantly reduced (5).



noisebuster

**NoiseBuster's Active Noise Reduction system protects ears from loud noises.**

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