

# PULL!



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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE FOR THE CLAY PIGEON SHOOTING ASSOCIATION

RICHARD FAULDS  
AND IAN PEEL TALK  
**SUCCESS IN  
SYDNEY**

**GUN REVIEW**  
LONGHORNE BOXLOCK  
SPORTER 3001

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# EXCEL

**B725** SPORTER

  
**BROWNING**



# HEARING LOSS PREVENTION

Ear, nose, and throat specialist **Mr Paul Montgomery FRCS** educates us about hearing loss and shooting.

**T**he sound intensity experienced by the shooter can be up to 150 decibels – this intensity is the same as standing next to a Boeing 747 airplane with its engines at full throttle.

Even though the sound lasts for a few thousandths of a second, it can damage ears permanently unless you take effective precautions. There is no cure for this damage!

For a right-handed shooter, the sound shockwave coming out of the muzzle hits the left ear more intensely than the right ear because the left ear is turned towards the muzzle. The right ear is relatively protected, due to the turned

head acting as a sound barrier. As a result of this, the left ear is exposed to more sound energy than the right ear.

Intense sound shockwaves can injure the delicate hearing membranes in the inner ear which can be perceived as a ringing, humming, high pitched sound, and/or hearing loss in the ears.

This is usually only temporary, but may become permanent after repeated exposure. In some unlucky people permanent ringing or hearing loss can occur after only one or two unprotected exposures.

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## TINNITUS

The ringing, humming, or high pitched sound in the ears, otherwise known as tinnitus, is the main problem for most shooters with damaged ears which is most obvious in quiet situations and when going to sleep at night. It may be useful to listen to the radio or podcasts at night to ignore the tinnitus as you try to drift off to sleep.

For the vast majority of shooters, the outlook is good with reduced awareness and disturbance – if the tinnitus in the ears becomes significantly troublesome and persistent it is worthwhile seeing a specialist.

If you are experiencing tinnitus, I would advise speaking to your GP about being seen by an

ear, nose, and throat (ENT) doctor who can examine your ears and look for other common causes, such as ear wax, and make sure you don't have any more concerning causes that occasionally occurs in patients who have tinnitus in one ear only.

When visiting the ENT doctor, they will perform a hearing test to determine if there is any moderate hearing loss alongside the tinnitus, and may suggest the use of hearing aids to help the tinnitus and also improve your hearing.

If the ENT doctor's examination and hearing test are normal, then cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for tinnitus may be recommended. This will be provided by a tinnitus specialist, available from both the NHS and the private health sector.



Left: Vario Revolution 6. Above: Cens ProFlex.



SIMON FINLAY

## HEARING PROTECTION

### DIFFICULTY HEARING

Hearing loss can occur in both ears, with one ear being worse than the other, or one ear only. It tends to be subtle and creeps up on the shooter.

The shooters may notice that it is more difficult to work out what people are saying, especially in crowded situations such as pubs or restaurants. In addition, the shooter may also find it more difficult to understand mobile phone conversations.

A hearing test typically show a four kilohertz 'dip' because the energy from the shockwave damages a particular part of the hearing membrane, which detects sounds between 3-6kHz.

This hearing test shows the characteristic dip appearance which is deeper in the left ear of a right-handed hooter and vice versa, based on a middle-aged recreational shooter who is right-handed.

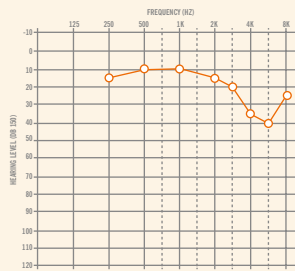
Being aware that you do have hearing loss is important in that it

reiterates the need for good ear protection. If practical, try to avoid noisy environments, or if you are in a pub or a restaurant seek areas that are less noisy. Explaining to friends and colleagues your problem with hearing and asking them to be understanding of it and to speak more clearly can be really helpful.

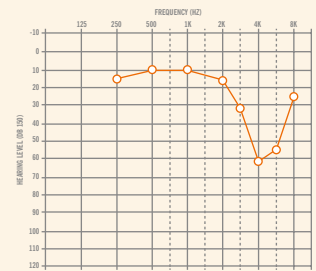
As with tinnitus, we would advise asking your GP to get you to be seen by an ENT doctor who can examine your ears and look for other common causes of hearing loss, such as ear wax, and make sure you do not have more concerning causes which do occasionally occur in patients who have deafness in one ear only.

The ENT doctor will perform a hearing test and if there is also moderate hearing loss then a hearing aid specialist, usually an audiologist, will discuss the use of hearing aids to help improve your hearing and reduce tinnitus, if it is present.

PURE TONE AUDIOGRAM – RIGHT



PURE TONE AUDIOGRAM – LEFT



to the noise of a large number of shots daily (say over 300) in close proximity to the gun, such as a coach may experience, we would advise you to wear both plugs and muffs.

Together, these should give a total attenuation of around 31 decibels, bringing the 150dB peak of the shotgun down to a more acceptable level. It is important to know that the proper sealing of earmuffs can be obstructed by things such as long hair,

beards, thick spectacle frames or jewellery. Damaged or broken muffs must be replaced immediately.

### IN SUMMARY

Prevention is critical so always wear ear protection.

If you are experiencing tinnitus, it usually improves and is treatable and the hearing loss, although permanent, can be effectively managed with hearing aids, which can also help to suppress tinnitus. 🍌

### PREVENTION

Experiencing tinnitus or mild hearing loss are warning signs. It is critical that you always wear ear protection if you are shooting, or within 20 meters of somebody shooting.

There is a wide range of products on the market providing ear protection and the CPSA Academy safety officer's manual gives the following guidance on standards you should look for concerning the various products:

- BS EN 352-1: Standard for earmuffs
- BS EN 352-2: Standard for earplugs
- BS EN 352-3: Standard for earmuffs attached to safety helmets
- BS EN 352-4: Standard for level-dependent (electronic) earmuffs

Some manufacturers may quote the SNR (standard noise reduction rating) for their product. This is normally between 20 and 35 – the higher the rating, the more protection you get. However,

you may be better off looking for the decibel reduction claimed for the product. Although the noise at work regulations only requires a 25dB attenuation try to find hearing protection with a minimum of 30. You should also always check the

manufacturer's ratings for your own suitability.

There are, however, two things to remember. Firstly, unless worn correctly and maintained properly, neither muffs nor plugs will prevent hearing damage. Secondly, if you are going to be subjected

Prevention is critical so always wear ear protection





▲ The Proflex DX Series offers a flexible range of features, with a mode to suit every shooter. The DX5 model has five modes featuring Wireless Comms, whilst the DX3 is diverse with three modes, and a single optimised mode on the DX1 is perfect for all shooters. **RRP: From £399 • censdigital.com**

▼ An advanced shooting headset with 360 degree stereo sound reproduction to help you hear exactly where the sound comes from. There is no chopping of sound in the waterproof sealed Military spec headset, which can be submerged in water for up to 30 minutes without affecting the functionality. Other features include extra comfortable gel seals as standard, up to 600 hours battery life, twin speakers in each ear cup for fail-safe audio, and AUX input for RX audio receive function. A Swatcom bluetooth neck-loop can also be attached. **RRP: From £270. Currently on sale for £232 • starkeyoutdoor.co.uk**



◀ The SWATCOM bluetooth neck-loop is an easy to use, comfortable, and durable bluetooth accessory giving SWATCOM Active8 and Pro X users the option to connect the headset to their smartphone. Simply plug the neck-loop into your headset, switch the loop on, pair to your mobile device or radio and you're away! The neck loop has up to ten hours talk and music stream time with just two hours to recharge. **RRP: From £66 • starkeyoutdoor.co.uk**





# PROTECT YOUR HEARING

Here are our top hearing protection picks



▲ Champion Vanquish Electronic Hearing Protection has been acoustically modelled on gunshot reports to achieve the optimal balance of all-day comfort and noise reduction. The bluetooth-enabled model features safe level sound compression technology, acoustic foam for all day comfort, a sound refresh time of <math><1\text{ms}</math>, two full dynamic range high definition speakers, three omnidirectional microphones, 150 hour run time with a three hour automatic shut off, and a noise reduction rating of 24 dB. **RRP: £129.99** [online.edgarbrothers.com](http://online.edgarbrothers.com)

▼ SWATCOM Silenta Kids Earmuffs are a 30dB SNR passive hearing protector, designed especially for children. They feature an adjustable, flexible, and durable design to ensure stability in a comfortable yet secure way. Available in a bright range of colours for heightened visibility. **RRP: From £25** • [swatcom.com](http://swatcom.com)



► SportEar Ghost Stryke Essential provides up to eight times normal hearing, 12 hours run time, advanced auto blocker with sound shut off at 85dB, ultra soft foam tips with 30dB NRR, and ultra comfortable silicone tips with 22dB. **RRP: price on request** • [gmk.co.uk](http://gmk.co.uk)



▲ Beretta Off Shot ST-W is an electronic, digital hearing protector that automatically removes shots and harmful noise over 85dB. These in-ear headphones provide exceptional protection from gunfire and are certificated to 32dB SNR, leaving you to converse in a natural way and to listen all the sounds in the surrounding environment. **RRP: £699.95** • [gmk.co.uk](http://gmk.co.uk)

