

Drivers of convertibles may be at risk for noise-induced hearing loss

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Drivers who frequently take to the road with the top down may be risking serious damage to their hearing, according to research presented at the 2009 American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Foundation (AAO-HNSF) Annual Meeting & OTO EXPO, in San Diego, CA.

A prospective study of the convertible-driving experience measured noise levels at speeds of 50, 60, and 70 miles per hour (mph), and indicated that drivers are consistently exposed to between 88 and 90 DbA, with a high of 99 Db. Long or repeated exposure to sounds over 85 Db is widely recognized to cause permanent [hearing loss](#). Road surface, traffic congestion, wind noise, and driving speed were all contributing factors.

Furthermore, the simple act of keeping car windows raised would significantly reduce noise exposure levels to 82 dB, even with the top down.

The authors suggest that motorcycle riders might be looked to as a positive example, because while they are consistently exposed to louder [noise](#) levels, as a group they more frequently use ear protection.

Source: American Academy of Otolaryngology

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