

ADVERTISING FEATURE

HEALTH & FITNESS

Prolonged noise causes hearing loss

Peace and quiet, nowadays the cliché phrase stands for an impossible dream without some searching.

Where can one go to be free of the noise made by the products of modern industry? Where can one go to find silence, or sound that is soothing to the ear?

Not all that we eat is good for us, nor is all that we hear. Sit quietly at home or work for five to 10 minutes and list each different sound you hear.

How many are welcome? And how many are unwelcome? Which ones normally pass unnoticed? And when was there silence?

Sound travels in waves that are picked up as pressure on the eardrum and measured in decibels (dB).

One decibel has been arbitrarily set as the softest sound the human ear can hear.

For instance, quiet breathing registers 10 dB.

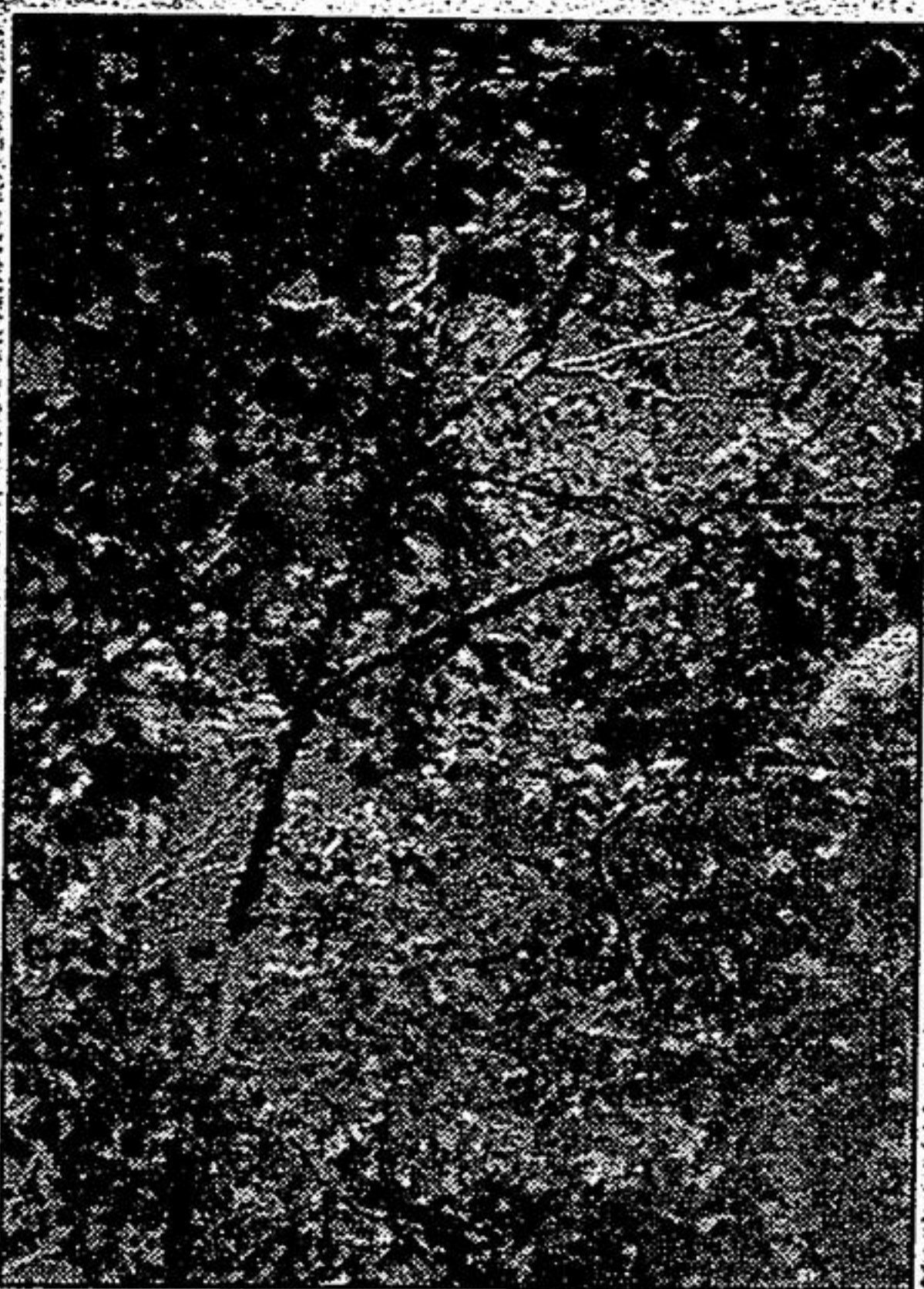
A rustle of leaves in a silent forest registers 20 to 30 dB. An alarm clock assaults the ear at 80 dB and a jack-hammer at 100 dB.

Live rock music amplified, registers 90 to 130 dB and a jet engine at take off causes 120 to 140 dB of pressure on the eardrum.

Pre-dawn garbage collections, road repairs, horns and sirens, loud music and planes are typical city complaints.

In the country it is often farm equipment, highway and truck traffic, chain saws and snowmobiles. And at home, blenders, dishwashers, vacuum cleaners and lawn mowers are common problems.

The ill-effects of noise are cumulative. Strong vibration from excessive



STAFF PHOTO/LISA CARTWRIGHT

Light sleepers are awakened at 40 to 50 decibels of sound. A rustle of leaves in a silent forest registers at 20 to 30 decibels.

As a precaution against hearing loss, avoid repeated exposure to situations that leave your ears ringing or your hearing with a sense of dullness.

Conversations held over the sound of the TV or radio exasperate some, and don't bother others. Barking dogs, radios playing, crying children, neighbours fighting and late night car repairs often fall in the annoying category.

Other sounds are unnoticed but still take their toll. At night, most sleepers are awakened by noises above 70 dB. At 50 dB about half will awaken or shift out of a deep sleep to a light, troubled one. Some highly sensitive sleepers will be disturbed by a sound as moderate as 40 to 50 dB.

And, in order of age, the first to be

noise actually wears out the sensory cells of the ear until they can no longer respond.

Because the process develops slowly it often goes unnoticed until it is advanced enough to interfere with communication.

The change is permanent, however, and can't be repaired by medicine or surgery, although a hearing aid may help some people.

Much damage can be avoided.

As a precaution against hearing loss, avoid repeated exposure to situations that leave your ears ringing or your hearing with a sense of dullness. Similarly, if you have to shout directly into another person's ear in order to be heard, the sound level around you can be having a damaging effect, especially if the situation is constantly repeated.

Some sounds are described as noise because they are primarily annoying.

Reactions to these sounds vary with individual perceptions of what is desirable.

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Some highly sensitive sleepers will be disturbed by a sound as moderate as 40 to 50 dB.

And, in order of age, the first to be

disturbed are grandparents, then parents, then teenagers. Small children are most often undisturbed.

Registered nurses encourage people to take time to stop and listen to the sounds around you.

Sound health begins at home. Peace and quiet and welcome sounds need to be dreams that come true—not lost to our modern society.

CORRECTION NOTICE

The St. Ives Dark Circle Diminisher advertised on page 5 of the Shoppers Drug Mart flyer in effect from Sunday, September 19th until Saturday, September 25th, 1999 is not available in Canada.

We apologize for any inconvenience that this may have caused.



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