\*This blog post version requires some quick edits on your part. Don’t over think it, write as if you are sitting next to your patient during an appointment and speak to one person. I encourage you to share your personal stories or information where you see fit.

\*If this version is not to your liking and you would like something more ridged and professional sounding this version is also available.

**Healthy Habits that Decrease Your Risk of Hearing Loss**

The new year has just begun! Now is a great time to start making good decisions that will influence the success of 2020; but whether you set a New Year’s resolution or not, you’re about to receive some motivation to pursue self-improvement by me, your local audiologist \_\_\_\_\_[Au.D name]\_\_\_.

Now that January is halfway over, you have probably seen many dieting ads over the television. Participating in healthier habits is important, but these advertisements can sometimes be more daunting than inspiring. Instead of improving your weight, I’m here to show you other ways you can improve your life. I’m so excited to share my research with you!

**Walking 2 Hours Per Week Can Maintain Your Hearing**

One of my roles as an audiologist is to diagnose and treat hearing loss. Over the last \_\_\_ years, I have helped thousands of individuals with this chronic and disabling condition. Throughout these years, I have unfortunately seen hearing loss to be common.

Data on risk factors for hearing loss are limited, but during my research, I came across several studies that suggest changes to one’s daily habits can reduce the onset of hearing loss *(seriously?!)*. One of those studies, published by the *American Journal of Medicine*, states that people have less risk of developing hearing loss if they participate in physical activities – specifically, women who walk more than 2 hours per week.

Another interesting fact is strenuous or not, exercise can help maintain hearing regardless of one’s age. [Seriously though, I’ll take any excuse to go for a walk rather than a run!] On a serious note though, as an audiologist, I counsel my patients regarding the common stigmas associated with hearing loss, such as aging. This data also affirms for me that hearing loss isn’t always directly caused by age!

[This would be a good time for me to share one of my resolutions this year (maybe you can help me stay accountable…!))] Every time before I hit play on the next Netflix series, I am going to make a commitment to go for a walk. Comment below if you want to join in! Not only am I loving myself enough to treat my body and mind with the exercise it needs, but I am also reducing my risk of hearing loss. Whoo Hoo!

**Smoking Might be Damaging Your Hearing**

According to the *Journal of the Association for Research in Otolaryngology*, quitting or reducing smoking and avoiding passive exposure to tobacco smoke may prevent hearing loss. The study shows that passive exposure to tobacco smoke compared to non-smokers was associated with 28% elevated risk of hearing loss. The study also notes that their data included not only an association with smoking and hearing loss but also with cardiovascular disease, showing multiple reasons to quit the habit.

Something unexpected that the study presented is that ex-smokers have a slightly reduced risk of hearing loss than non-smokers. Let me say that one more time… ex-smokers have a slightly reduced risk of hearing loss than non-smokers! The study suggests that their reduced risk is due to ex-smokers adopting a healthier lifestyle than non-smokers, one that affected other comorbidities that cause hearing loss (i.e. hypertension, diabetes).

If reducing or quitting smoking is one of your resolutions this year, keep up the good work! Your hard work will pay off in more ways than one. Do you have a personal story about someone who had to quit smoking? Maybe you can make a comment sympathizing with how hard it is to quit, then give reasurance.

**Protect Your Hearing This Year**

Many of us own a pair of sunglasses. Sometimes, we carry them on us or keep them in our vehicles to protect our eyes against the damaging rays of the sun, but how many of you carry hearing protection with you? Do you have a designated spot for hearing protection in your vehicle? [Audiologists, do you carry hearing protection with you? If so include a sentence or two about how you practice the good habit]

Many of my patients tell me that they have gone to concerts so loud that they wish they had brought hearing protection with them. I want this year to be the year that people start to take their hearing health as seriously as their vision. When used correctly, disposable hearing protection is a great way to decrease exposure to noise and reduce the risk of hearing loss.

As an audiologist, I can order you a custom pair of hearing protection that is durable and lasts for years. Just let us know if you are interested in learning more!

This year, do yourself a favor and designate a spot for your hearing protection in your purse or vehicle.

**Closing Remarks**

This research provides insight on what may be damaging your hearing today. Luckily, the research also provides possible strategies for prevention.

Many of us are fixated on the stigmas associated with hearing loss. Many believe that hearing loss just happens naturally as you age. However, more and more research is emerging that suggests otherwise. Like I mentioned before, cardiovascular disease, cerebrovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, and dyslipidemia have been linked to an increased risk of hearing loss.

As an audiologist, I always recommend healthy hearing habits such as avoiding loud sounds and using hearing protection. However, research has shown me that I can also recommend healthy lifestyle habits such as walking at least 2 hours per week and reducing one’s exposure to cigarette smoke.

No matter what your goals are for the new year, plan to incorporate a healthier mindset. By carrying hearing protection with you, reducing your exposure to cigarette smoke, and/or walking with a loved one, you can greatly reduce your risk of hearing loss this year. I hope this blog post has been inspiring!

Until next time,

[sign your name]

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