

How do I clean my earplugs and earmuffs?

It's a question we are frequently asked – how do I clean my earplugs and earmuffs, along with how long can I wear them for?

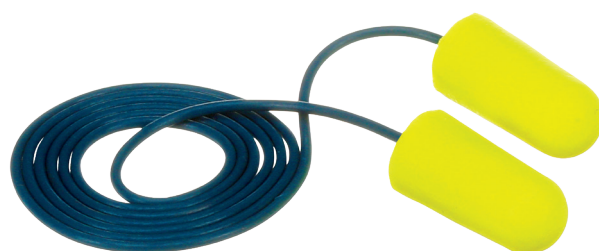






It's important to know how long you can use each type of hearing protection device (HPD) and how to care for it to maintain optimal hearing protection. In order to extend the lifespan of your HPD, proper use of it goes a long way – improper care of your earplugs may introduce a foreign substance and may not only pose a risk but might make insertion and/or retention harder.

The more often earplugs or earmuffs are worn it is possible that contaminants could build up, which leads to the importance of ensuring a clean HPD. The more often earplugs or earmuffs are worn, the higher the chances that contaminants are produced, which leads to the increased importance of preventing contaminants from entering the body. When it comes to earplugs especially, if chemicals that are hazardous to the skin are present on the surface of, or absorbed, into the body of a foam earplug, they may come into contact with your skin while you're using the plug.

Earplugs

The chart on the next page describes how to clean different types of earplugs to help you extend their life while offering optimal hearing protection. In most cases, you should replace your earplugs when they are dirty, damaged or don't return to their original shape.







	Product	Cleaning	Inspecting	Replacing
	Roll-down foam earplugs	Wipe dirt and debris from earplugs with a clean cloth between uses.	Ensure the earplug is fully intact. Then assess if they return to their original uncompressed shape and softness between uses.	Replace when earplugs don't return to their original shape or when they are excessively soiled or contaminated (no longer hygienic).
	Push-to-fit earplugs	Wipe dirt and debris from earplugs with a clean cloth between uses.	Assess if foam tip is damaged, detached from the stem, or is not soft and pliable.	Replace if earplug is at all damaged or is excessively soiled or contaminated (no longer hygienic).
	Premolded / reusable earplugs	Wash earplugs with mild soap and warm water as needed.	Check for tears or cracks under any of the three flanges.	Replace if flanges are damaged, detached from the stem, or are not soft and pliable.
	Electronic earplug	If the earplugs are composed of a reusable material, the earplug tip should be removed and washed according to the manufacturer's instructions. If the earplugs are composed of foam, wipe off any debris with a dry, clean cloth. Do not immerse the electronic earplug in water or any solution.	Inspect as outlined in the manufacturer's instructions. For cleaning the earplug tip follow the instructions above depending on the style; foam, push-to-fit or reusable.	Replace tip when it is damaged, no longer hygienic or if a foam tip doesn't return to its original uncompressed state. Replace the entire unit if damaged.

Earmuffs

The chart on the next page describes how to clean different parts of your earmuffs. It's important to replace worn or damaged cushions and foam inserts with a hygiene kit. 3M recommends that the cushions and foam inserts are replaced at least twice a year in order to maintain acceptable noise reduction, hygiene and comfort. If you have electronic earmuffs, it's important to manually turn them off before cleaning them or replacing the batteries.



	Part	Cleaning	Inspecting	Replacing
	Cup shell & headband	Do not immerse in water. Wipe the outside regularly with mild soap and lukewarm water.	Check regularly for cracked or worn parts.	Replace cushions at least twice a year from hygiene kit or sooner if damaged.
	Cushion	Wipe with mild soap and water.	Determine if cushion is soiled or cracked.	Replace if cushion is soiled, replace with new cushion from hygiene kit.
	Foam insert	Never wet or dampen foam inserts.	Determine if foam insert is soiled or damaged.	Replace if foam insert is soiled, replace with new foam insert from hygiene kit.
	Windsocks (For microphones on electronic HPDs)	Replace when dirty.	Inspect regularly and replace as necessary.	When replacing batteries, electronic earmuffs should be turned off manually in order to protect them from damage.

When cleaning earmuffs

- Do not immerse in water
- Do not store in temperatures above 55°C (130°F), e.g., behind a windshield
- Do not clean with solvents such as isopropyl alcohol (IPA), alcohol, acetone, or with waterless hand cleaners or products containing lanolin
- Do not wet or dampen foam

To learn more visit 3M.ca/Hearing



3M Personal Safety Division
 3M Canada
 P.O. Box 5757
 London, Ontario N6A 4T1
 1-800-3MHELPS
3M.ca/Hearing

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