

Offering a word of advice about hearing issues

As a long-term shooter with over 40 years of involvement in the shooting sport, and many of these were at an early age, long ago when hearing and eye protection were not often considered important, I have to accept that today I have serious hearing damage, especially in my right ear.

I was notified of my hearing issues at the age of 17 when I was rejected by the SAAF when I applied for a pilot's training course – my hearing was already quite poor after just two years of competitive pistol shooting!

This preamble is written to encourage all shooters, no matter what their level of shooting involvement, to please take every precaution to protect their hearing, and their eyes of course.



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Because of my particular hearing issues, I have become quite sensitive to the noise levels on the firing line, and even with high quality earmuffs, I still remain quite noise sensitive.

I was, however, recently made aware of a really useful optional hearing protection device known as the PROTEC ear insert.

This insert is specially made to suit each individual's inner ear shape, and the result is an insert that is not only largely invisible, but it is also extremely comfortable to wear, because of its precise fit inside the ear channel.

I decided to have a set of Protec ear inserts made because I realised that the ear-muffs I was wearing still allowed too much noise to pass through, and I blamed the ear-muffs for the noise distractions that I was experiencing.

I visited Protec-Ear SA's offices in Pretoria and they took precise resin impressions of each of my ear channels, and then produced a set of ear inserts that have made an incredible difference for me.

The Protec ear inserts are available in two versions, either with complete "noise block-out", or the "voice friendly" version.

I opted for the "Voice friendly" version, because these have a laser-cut internal path that allows air and human voice sounds to reach the eardrum.

I am particularly air pressure sensitive, so this air pathway inside the insert reduces the build-up of pressure inside my ear, whilst also allowing human speech to be heard.

I tested these new ear protection inserts, which I wore under my existing earmuffs, for 3 days of intensive shooting at the SANDF Championships that have just been concluded in Pretoria, and the results were far beyond my wildest dreams.

Not only did I become totally shielded from the gunshot sounds that had been bothering me previously, even when using good quality earmuffs, but my scores soared, because noise did not interrupt my focus and concentration, something I did not even realise was happening before!

The Protec-EAR SA inserts cost no more than a good pair of electronic earmuffs, but they have been significantly more effective for me, making gunshots sounds no longer a disturbance at all.

Protec-EAR SA have agents country-wide, so their product is easily accessible all over SA.

Please check your hearing and your eyesight at least once a year if you are a regular shooter, our sport is demanding on the eyes and dangerous to the ears.

Best wishes in Shooting.

Shaun Kennedy, Vice – Presid