

Electronic Shooters Protection

By Tony Gimmellie

You only have one set of ears and you need to protect them while you can. Over the last 21 years I have exposed my ears to a lot of loud noises ranging from rock concerts, power tools, to machine gun and rocket fire. This exposure to noise can occur throughout your day to day life, hobbies and your work profession.

During my 10 years in the Marine Corps my ears were exposed and damaged. I did wear hearing protection at all times to help protect my ears but damage was still occurring. Over the last 20 years of military and law enforcement I have used every type of hearing protection, from the foam plugs, muffs, electronic muffs and every combination of both.

All of these hearing protections have good and bad qualities, but they still never gave me exactly what I needed. I can't tell you how many sets of electronic muffs that broke or I would lose one ear in them. Shooting rifles and shotguns with muffs was a pain. It would either move the ear pro off my ears exposing me to loud noise as well as slowing me down making shooting uncomfortable. So I would have to double up inside ears and muffs. Well now I couldn't hear people talk or the shot timer beep or start signal. So I then would have to pull my ear pro off to be able to hear which caused me to be exposed to other shooting on other ranges. So this led me to wear just in ear foamies to fix the above mentioned problems. Well that wasn't enough protection to protect my ears. I would come back from matches knowing I damaged my ears even more.

Last year I decided enough was enough and I started researching electronic in ear hearing protection that could be molded for my ears and give me maximum protection as well as be comfortable for all day use and wear. After contacting numerous companies and learning about their products, one company stood out as the over all leader in all these categories as well as the best choice to suit my needs.

ESP- Electronic Shooters Protection became the choice for protecting my ears. The next question was what model did I want and what were the advantages of each type. I was ready to spend whatever money it took in order to get the best pair I could afford.

I still had numerous questions on the products so I decided to email ESP to get a few answers to help me make my decision. Immediately upon sending my email I received an email back from Jack Homa the owner of ESP. Jack sent me multiple emails over the course of the next week answering my questions helping me break down the differences between each pair to find the one that would work for me.

ESP offers multiple options for you to choose from. Check out their site at this link to find the ones that fit your needs. You can also find the technical specs of all the ESP's there as well.

A lot went into making my decision on exactly what pair to pick. My hearing is decreasing each year and I know if I didn't take the proper steps to protect my ears I will be wearing hearing aids

real soon. I also needed to be able to hear around me while getting the max protection. I needed a pair that I could wear comfortably for 8-10 hours at a time. My plan was to use these on the firing line on a daily basis as a Firearms Instructor where I need to talk and communicate with shooters, as well while competing in matches.

Once I made up my mind I went with the ESP Stealth model of hearing protection.

ESP Stealth - <http://www.espamerica.com/p-22-stealth-digital-shooting-shooters-electronic-hearing-protection-ear-plugs-ear-buds-earplugs-earbuds.aspx>

The next step was to go to an ear doctor and get molds of my ears made. ESP also has dealers all around the country, check their website to find a dealer near you. I made an appointment and \$70 later and 20 minutes of my time I had good quality ear molds to send to Jack for him to make my Stealth's from. It was a very fast process. I received my ESP's in 12 days from the time I sent the molds in.

Upon receiving my new Stealth's I quickly popped the batteries in and went to work. All of ESP's ear protection runs off the commonly found 1.4 volt hearing aid style batteries you can find at almost any store. Average life span per battery is roughly 250 hours of use or 6 weeks from the time you peel the label off the back of the battery.

I popped them into my ears without turning them on to check the fit. They fit tight and firm into my ear and they were comfortable. In addition to that I was amazed at how quiet and how much actual sound reduction the Stealth's provided to me when they were off. Now it was time to turn them on and see what I could hear. Holy crap!!!, were the next words out of my mouth. I could not believe how crystal clear and how much I could hear with these in place. I wore them for awhile around the house but the real test was to come when I went to work the next day.

I arrived at work and couldn't wait to go on the range and test these out. I tested them all by themselves, I tested them with electronic muffs that were turned on or off as well as tested with just the ESP's by themselves in the off position. I am happy to report that they work in all configurations flawlessly. None the less I was able to communicate with shooters on the line and clearly hear what they were saying.

A few days later I was off to shoot a match up in Wyoming . I was shooting a 300 Winchester Magnum at this match and I chose to only use the ESP's and no muffs. My thoughts were if my ears didn't ring or feel like they were exposed to damage during this that this was a homerun. While at the match I wore the Stealth's all day and they were comfortable in my ears and I was able to hear and communicate with no issues. At one point I was talking to my teammate Rob who was 120 yards away and 50 feet below me as we stood on opposite mountain ridge's. We were able to have a conversation with each other while using a casual talking voice. Oh and to make it even more impressive, there was a 12 MPH wind blowing as well. The other thing I noticed was I could hear birds chirping!!! Yes you may not find that impressive but for me it was, for the simple fact my hearing has been so bad I can't tell you when I heard birds chirp.

Since then I have used my Stealth's on a daily basis with no issues, and to be honest this was a great investment. I know a lot of people out there are looking at the price and saying they are a bit pricey. But my question to you is, What is your hearing worth? A set of hearing aids when you finally damage your ears bad enough will cost you 2-3 times. The price of what the ESP's will cost you and you will have to wear them the rest of your life. Also add up how much you have spent on electronic muffs and foamies and how often you are replacing them and not getting what you need out of them and you will quickly see that the money on the ESP's is worth it.

If you are looking for quality hearing protection, then look no further then ESP. Team Blaster fully endorses and uses ESP for all our shooting needs and so should you.

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