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Loud sounds have hidden health risks



When using power tools, lawn equipment or other machinery, wear properly fitted earplugs or earmuffs from the start, rather than waiting until the noise becomes uncomfortable. PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

Noise pollution a serious but often forgotten hazard

Laura Coco
San Diego State University | THE CONVERSATION

The human body is remarkably good at getting used to the environment around it. You’ve probably experienced this if you’ve ever gone to a matinee and emerged from the dark theater into sunshine. Your eyes sting, so you squint and shield your face until they adjust to the bright sunlight. • In the same way, the body can grow accustomed to constant noise. With repeated exposure to traffic, leaf blowers, construction, loud music, crowded restaurants, fitness classes and sporting events, you can become accustomed to loud environments. Over time, what once seemed unusually loud may barely register.

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Hearing damage is only part of the story. Noise acts as a stressor, activating the autonomic nervous and endocrine systems and affecting heart rate, blood pressure and other physiological processes.



The entrance to the expanded Savannah Convention Center on Feb. 14, 2025 on Hutchinson Island. RICHARD BURKHART/SAVANNAH MORNING NEWS

Largest convention highlights expansion

Savannah Convention Center has ‘real tangible economic impact’

Evan Lasseter
Savannah Morning News
USA TODAY NETWORK

When the International Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society’s annual conference came to the Savannah Convention Center in mid-September, it used every square inch of the center’s space, said General Manager Kelvin Moore. That includes the 200,000 square feet of new exhibit halls brought by the center’s \$276 million expansion. IVECCS’ conference marked the center’s largest single convention since its February 2025 opening. “Had the convention center not been expanded, we simply would not have been able to house them,” Moore said. The convention was 5,500 registered attendees and about 5,475 booked hotel room nights. The event was branded by IVECCS as the “premier conference for emergency and critical care veterinarians, technicians, practice managers, and students,” according to its website. Moore said conventions are particularly strong from an economic impact perspective because convention attendees typically stay multiple nights, and frequent restaurants or other entertainment options such as museums. The estimated economic impact from the IVECCS event was \$1.3 million, he said. But the event was also significant for when it happened—Monday through Thursday. Local tourism leaders have said the city typically sees bustling activity on the weekends, but

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Buddy Walk returns to support local families

Jane Imbody
Savannah Morning News
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Lowcountry Down Syndrome Society will bring hundreds of walkers, families and supporters to Forsyth Park on Oct. 17 for its 21st Annual Buddy Walk, a fundraiser that supports programs and services for individuals with Down syndrome and their families. Opening ceremonies begin at 10 a.m.

and the one-mile walk starts at 10:30 a.m., according to a community announcement. Activities, including speakers, self-advocates, live music and support from SCAD athletic teams, are scheduled to continue until 2 p.m. The event is held each October during National Down Syndrome Awareness Month and celebrates the abilities and achievements of individuals with Down syndrome. Organizers say money raised through the walk supports pro-

grams and services offered by the Lowcountry Down Syndrome Society. “This event is all about coming together as a community to support and celebrate individuals with Down syndrome,” said Candy Bogardus, LDSS president. “Every step we take at the Buddy Walk makes a real difference in the lives of families across our region. We encourage everyone to come out.

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A young participant is all smiles during the 2025 Lowcountry Down Syndrome Society Buddy Walk. RICHARD BURKHART/SAVANNAH MORNING NEWS

