



EAR TO EAR INSPIRATIONS

3 people who took a win from hearing loss

It's easy to think hearing loss would be a disadvantage in life—but you'd never know it from these outstanding individuals. All became famous in their fields while experiencing hearing loss to some degree. Learn what these hard-of-hearing heroes did during their lifetimes and how each turned an impairment into an improvement.

Ludwig Van Beethoven

1770 – 1827

Beethoven was so distressed about his worsening hearing during his 30s that he wrote of suicide to his brothers. But commitment to his art—and creative approaches—kept him composing.

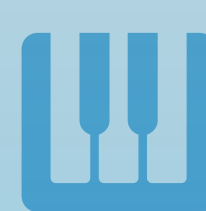
NO. 5

The Symphony famous for its “da-da-da-DUNN” motif was Beethoven's recollection of a bird's song. (Just much, much louder.)



3

The piano legs Beethoven dismantled so he could lie next to his keyboard and feel the instrument's vibrations through the floorboards.



400

Conversation books in which Beethoven and his friends wrote notes to each other to compensate for his hearing loss. Today they're rich insights into his music.



ANOTHER NO. 5

When the audience erupted into applause at this Piano Concerto's premiere, Beethoven had to be turned to face the crowd—he couldn't hear their ovations.



Thomas Edison

1847 – 1931

We know him for his inventions in sound—the phonograph, recorded music, and motion pictures just to name a few, but many people are surprised to learn Thomas Edison was severely hard of hearing.

3

Total months of Edison's formal schooling.



12

Edison's age when he contracted scarlet fever which led to hearing loss.



1,093

The number of U.S. patents Edison held at his death.



He never devised a hearing aid, but his carbon transmitter paved the way for instruments today.

William Hoy

1862 – 1961

The most accomplished deaf player in Major League Baseball, William Hoy is credited in developing baseball umpires' hand signals. Highly intelligent, Hoy would correct anyone addressing him with an epithet referring to his hearing-impaired speech, but in humor he referred to himself as “Dummy.”

1

His class ranking as valedictorian from the Ohio State School for the Deaf.



WW1

Hoy supervised hundreds of deaf workers at the Goodyear factory to support war efforts.

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Standing just 5'4" tall, Hoy's tiny strike zone and quick feet led to an impressive on-base percentage.

