

THE MASKING HANDBOOK (FOR AUDIOMETRY)

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APPENDIX A2

THE OPTIMIZED METHOD

- An appropriate, asymmetrical hearing loss is present and masking is required for air and/or bone conduction.
- The ear with the poor hearing is the Test Ear (TE). The ear with the better hearing ear is our Non-Test Ear (NTE).
- Observe the TE hearing threshold. Subtract 10 dB to obtain the Initial Masking Level (IML) value.
- Deliver this level of appropriate masking noise to the NTE; retest the threshold with the IML presented.
- If the initial, unmasked threshold does not shift with this IML, an appropriately masked threshold is documented.
- (As a cross-check, a “mini-plateau” can be done prior to accepting the masked threshold. Just increase the masking noise by 5-10 dB and retest to ensure that the masked threshold is stable.)
- If the IML threshold produced a shift in threshold compared to the unmasked result, increase the masking noise level to the NTE by the amount that the threshold shifted.
- Retest.
- Any further shifts in threshold during the Optimized Method mean that the masking noise is further increased by the amount that the threshold responses shift.