

Managing tinnitus

Tinnitus – the perception of noises in the ears or head when there is no sound – is a symptom of activity in the auditory system. Often the cause of the activity is unknown, so there is no ‘cure’ for it.

The difference between troublesome tinnitus and non-troublesome tinnitus is the level of distress or annoyance that you feel. The source of distress is the reaction the individual has to the tinnitus.

The reaction occurs at two levels:

- Conscious thoughts about tinnitus
- Automatic subconscious reactions to a tinnitus sound

Most tinnitus does not signal disease or disorder. It won't deafen you, get louder and louder, or make you go crazy. It might even lessen over time, or go away.

Most people find they can learn to ‘tune it out’. By using the techniques described here, many people learn to stop paying attention to their tinnitus and are no longer bothered by it.



Get good information

Seek accurate information from:

An experienced Audiologist or Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Doctor

Look at the Tinnitus SA website for more information and facts tinnitussa.org

Increase sound input

Most people notice their tinnitus most of all **in a quiet room**, especially at night.

Avoid silence, use pleasant sound:

- To reduce the contrast between the tinnitus sounds and the quiet environment
- To distract yourself from the tinnitus

Try down loading one of the many tinnitus sound relief applications available on apple or android devices.

Manage your hearing loss

About **four in five people** with tinnitus have some hearing loss. Many people blame miscommunication on their tinnitus when in fact it's poor hearing that causes them to mishear.

Have your hearing tested by an Audiologist, if you haven't done so recently.

If you have hearing loss use hearing aids:

- To amplify conversations and other sounds so that you do not strain to hear
- To distract the auditory system from the tinnitus with ‘real’ sounds
- To mask (cover up) the tinnitus
- Many hearing aids have dedicated tinnitus programs. Ask your audiologist about this.

Understand the neurophysiology of tinnitus

The whole of the brain becomes involved in the tinnitus generation, detection and perception. Hence, both conscious thoughts and unconscious reactions are present.

These can be retrained using techniques which are highly effective for people with tinnitus and normal hearing, or hearing loss and/or sound sensitivity.

Tinnitus Retraining Therapy and Neuromonics Protocol™

- Sound enhancement using wearable noise generators, or music delivered through high-fidelity earphone (and hearing instruments, if indicated)
- Counselling to understand the mechanisms of tinnitus generation, detection and perception
- Relaxation and stress management

Understand the psychology of tinnitus

Psychological therapies aim to teach techniques to help you change the way you react to tinnitus so it becomes less intrusive and annoying.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT – with a psychologist or counsellor)

- Learn about the processes of thinking and behaviour
- Change the way you think about your tinnitus by identifying negative thoughts and substituting neutral thoughts
- Learn ways to divert your attention from the tinnitus, including using pleasant images
- Learn whole-body relaxation

Psychotherapy (with a psychologist or counsellor)

Useful for managing other difficult emotions, such as stress, anxiety and depression and chronic physical conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, chronic fatigue and chronic pain.

Helpful ways of learning to relax; to live in the present; and to not judge, reject and become angry with the tinnitus.

Useful for managing the re-emergence of prior psychological insults and experiences which interact with tinnitus

Other things to do

- Manage neck, shoulder, jaw problems
- Protect your hearing (use ear plugs or ear muffs)
- Get help for anxiety and depression
- Improve sleep patterns
- Keep occupied with activities you enjoy
- Do something for someone else

Contact Us

We would love to hear from you. For further information about our services and to discuss your needs please contact us on;

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Tinnitus SA
Lightens the load

About Tinnitus SA

Tinnitus SA is an online tinnitus information service designed to provide awareness, factsheets and information about management options for people with tinnitus and health professionals alike.

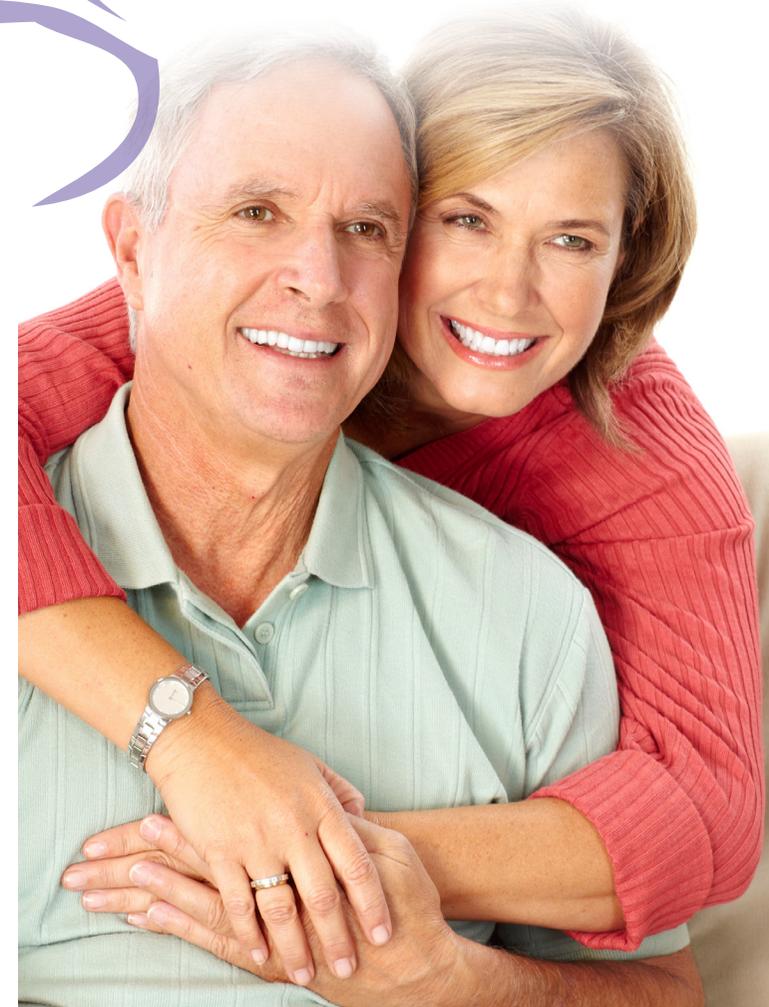
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