

Managing Tinnitus Tips to Try

Patient Information

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Managing Tinnitus

Why do we manage, and not “cure” tinnitus?

Tinnitus is not an illness. It is the sensation of hearing a sound from within the body. At least 30% of the UK population experiences tinnitus at some point in their life. Management techniques help the brain to focus away from the tinnitus sound, and make us react less to the noises from inside our bodies.

What management techniques may help with tinnitus?

Sound

Listening to sounds that we are in control of, and that we like to listen to, help us to move our focus away from the tinnitus. There are lots of different types of sound that people can use to help. Some people like to listen to music, television or the radio. Others find natural sounds, CDs, or mobile device apps may be more calming. Some of the hearing aid manufacturers offer specific tinnitus apps. Here are some links you could try:

Phonak Tinnitus Balance App (Available to download free of charge from iTunes or Google Play)

Oticon Tinnitus Sound App (Available to download free of charge from iTunes or Google Play).

The Tinnitus Clinic staff can help you to download these if you have any concerns.

Relaxation

Relaxation helps us to reduce tension and stress that may cause, or be a result of tinnitus. Relaxation can take many forms. Breathing exercises can be useful for most people to make them feel calm. We have included a few breathing exercises on this information sheet. Meditation and Visualisation are ways of using imagination to allow your body to relax and release tension. You could try to imagine you are walking in a lovely garden, or along a beach, and think of all the things you can see, hear, feel, smell and taste.

Alternatively, you could think about releasing the tension in each part of your body gradually from your toes up to the top of your head.

Other forms of relaxation include doing things we enjoy. This may be reading, watching TV or films, being active or outdoors, listening to music, dancing, or any other activity that allows you to feel calm.

Exercise and activity

Exercise, such as walking, running, swimming, yoga or going to the gym can be very helpful for managing tinnitus. Some people report that their tinnitus may be more noticeable during or straight after exercise. This is normal as your blood pressure and heart rate temporarily increases, and the tinnitus will settle back down very quickly. When people exercise they release tension and increase the levels of endorphins (chemicals that make you feel good) in their body. This can be positive for helping people to relax, stretch their muscles, and manage their tinnitus more easily.

Some people prefer to use activities they enjoy doing to help them focus away from their tinnitus.

Doing things we enjoy allows our brain to remember what it likes to think about. People report activities such as reading, painting, gardening, listening to music, watching TV or films, fishing or going out with family or friends can all help them to relax and make the tinnitus less intrusive.

Breathing exercises

The Breathing Exercises are about balance and control. These can slow breathing down, calm the mind and reduce tension. If you become light-headed, stop them for a moment and try again later.

Make sure your back is straight and your shoulders are relaxed. Breathe through your nose if possible.

Exercise 1: Breathing

Take three easy breaths in and out. Just watch the breath enter and leave the body. This can be practised as many times as you like during the day.

Exercise 2: Counting

Now take a complete breath in. As you breathe in, count. It does not matter what number you count to.

Fill your lungs completely. Then breathe out for the same number. This will improve the rate and balance of your breathing and will help you to feel more in control and relaxed.

Exercise 3: Pausing

Take a breath in and out and then just pause for a little while until you feel you need to breathe again. You might like to say the word “pause” to yourself. Don’t hold your breath. Notice the space between one breath and the next.

There are many breathing exercises and they can aid concentration, clarity of thought and produce a sense of inner quiet.

10 quick tips that may help you to manage stress and tinnitus:

1. Talk things out – Don’t bottle them up.
2. Eat sensibly and in moderation– Don’t cut out foods you enjoy, eat on the run or skip meals.
3. Treat yourself to a favourite thing once in a while.
4. Don’t rush for anything – Leave time in between tasks.
5. Practise saying “no” to jobs you don’t want to do.
6. Build 3 enjoyable things into each day.
7. Try a massage or complementary therapy (e.g. reflexology, acupuncture).
8. Write down your worries and cross them out.
9. Do some muscle relaxation exercises. Neck and shoulder exercises can be helpful if you have no diagnosed conditions in these areas.
10. Enjoy a nice bath or shower to wash away negative feelings.

Please use this space to write notes/reminders.

Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends and carers.

Contact Us

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Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use and store the information we hold about you, please take a look at our “how we use your information” leaflet which can be found on the Trust website: www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient_information/Leaflets/

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, braille and other languages upon request. For more information please ask in department/ward.

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