

ILLAWARRA ENT, HEAD & NECK CLINIC

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TINNITUS

Tinnitus is head or ear noise. All people suffer from tinnitus at some time, e.g. after loud noise exposure, but 75% of the population aged between 40 and 80 have constant tinnitus which interferes with their enjoyment of life. The most common cause of tinnitus is degeneration of the nerve cells of the cochlear, or inner ear. The degeneration may be due to ageing, noise exposure, ear injury or many other factors. Rarely tinnitus can be caused by high blood pressure, blood vessel abnormalities, anaemia or even benign tumours of the nerve of hearing. The examination and hearing tests you will undergo will rule out these rare causes. Tinnitus can be managed and there is much that we can do to help overcome the annoyance you suffer. Please be aware, like blood pressure, tinnitus can be managed but usually not cured by medication or surgery, so beware of people who claim a cure. Occasionally tinnitus can be generated by OR made worse by jaw joint dysfunction, wax build up or debris from infection.

The first step to management is accepting that tinnitus is not life-threatening and does not mean that you have a brain tumour or that you will have a stroke or go mad. Below is a list of steps that you can take to help manage your tinnitus.

IN GENERAL Get adequate sleep. Try to avoid anxiety and excessive fatigue.

AVOID Loud noise, smoking, alcohol, coffee, tea, tonic water and Aspirin

TRY MASKING In general, tinnitus is less noticeable when there is background noise. Also, people tend to prefer noise they can control themselves to noises which they cannot control. At night a loud ticking clock, or even the hiss of a radio turned off an FM station can provide excellent masking. What may be more pleasurable, however, is a favourite music tape or relaxation tape played very softly. Commercially available maskers that look like hearing aids are also available.

MEDICATIONS Sometimes a mild sedative may be needed to help you get off to sleep. Your local doctor can help. There is some evidence that Calcium, Zinc and Vitamin B Complex may be of some value. BEROCCA contains Vitamin B Complex, Vitamin C and Zinc. Also you may wish to try Ginkgo Biloba or Tebonin or even www.tinnitusformula.com

RELAXATION Relaxation training may help in coping with tinnitus.

Further information is available from The Australian Tinnitus Association (NSW).

HELPFUL CONTACT FOR THOSE WITH TINNITUS

CLINICS: NSW & ACT

ST VINCENT' S HOSPITAL - 1300 134 327 TINNITUS RETRAINING THERAPY

CONCORD HOSPITAL - 9767 6900 TINNITUS RETRAINING THERAPY

UNIVERSITY OF NSW 9385 3042

CANBERRA 6285 1098

OTHER: Neuromonics Device 02 9410 4300

**NSW Ménière's Support Group
PO Box 1077 BOWRAL 2576
email: nswmsg@hinet.net.au**

ORGANISATIONS:

ATA NSW 02 8382 3331

ATA VIC 03 9739 3125

ATA WA 08 9349 3436

SELF HELP GROUP TAS 08 6228 0011

TAG SA 08 8263 5116

Sound Therapy International Pty Ltd
Commerical Unit 2/9 Bergin Street
GERRINGONG 2534 Ph: 4234 4534 Website: www.soundtherapy.com.au/index.htm

SOUND THERAPY FOR TINNITUS AND HYPERACUSIS

Tinnitus is a common symptom which can be troublesome for some people. It may be associated with hearing loss or ear disease and can be related to hyperacusis, a painful sensitivity to sound.

Medications have not been found to be of great value for tinnitus. Randomised trials suggest that simple medications, such as Ginkgo Biloba, are no better than placebo. Other medications, such as anti-epileptic treatments, can have unacceptable sedative side-effects.

Sound therapy has been used since the 1980s as an alternative management for tinnitus. The principle is based on providing white noise to the ear of the tinnitus sufferer to induce auditory habituation.

White Noise is an unobtrusive wide-frequency sound spectrum, which sounds like rain or a fan.

Auditory habituation is a brain function whereby the sound of tinnitus is drowned out by the wide frequency white noise and becomes less annoying with time. The exact mechanism whereby auditory habituation occurs is not understood but seems to involve "neural plasticity", the ability of the brain to "rewire" itself, and to correct abnormal circuitry.

The application of sound therapy is the cornerstone of current Tinnitus Retraining Therapy. With the advent of modern MP3 type players, sound therapy can be easily and economically sourced.

Go to **www.NoiseRelief.com** to source White Noise MP3 downloads, CDs and related products.

Sounds, such as digital white noise, babbling brook, downpour of rain, campside fire, seaside sounds and waterfall sounds are available. Also, relaxation, sleep and meditation music may be purchased.

After downloading your white noise source, use your MP3 player to play back the sound at or just above your perceived Tinnitus volume. Use the sounds when you are relaxing or in a quiet setting and when you are going off to sleep.

Persist concentrating on the white noise rather than your tinnitus.