

How to Manage Your Tinnitus: A Step-by-Step Workbook

Third Edition - abbreviated

James A. Henry, PhD

Tara L. Zaugg, AuD

Paula J. Myers, PhD

Caroline J. Schmidt, PhD

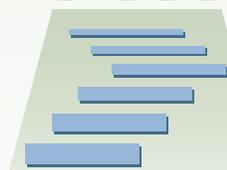


VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

PTM



*Progressive Tinnitus
Management*

How to Manage Your Tinnitus: A Step-by-Step Workbook

Third edition - abbreviated

James A. Henry, PhD
Tara L. Zaugg, AuD
Paula J. Myers, PhD
Caroline J. Schmidt, PhD

James A. Henry, PhD

VA RR&D National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research (NCRAR) at the VA Portland Health Care System and Department of Otolaryngology, Oregon Health & Science University; Portland, Oregon.

Tara L. Zaugg, AuD

VA RR&D National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research at the VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, Oregon.

Paula J. Myers, PhD

Audiology Clinic, James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital, Tampa, Florida.

Caroline J. Schmidt, PhD

VA Connecticut Healthcare System, West Haven, Connecticut and Department of Psychiatry, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

Design and illustrations: **Lynn Kitagawa, MFA**, Medical Media, VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, Oregon.

Photography: **Michael Moody, Medical Photographer**, Medical Media, VA Portland Health Care System, Portland, Oregon.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to our nation's military Veterans. We thank you for serving our country. You are the reason we enjoy freedom.

Acknowledgments

Development and publication of this book was supported by VA Rehabilitation Research and Development (RR&D) Service, the NCRAR, and VA Employee Education System. Numerous individuals have contributed in various and significant ways toward this effort, including:

- **Russell L. Bennett** (Computer Specialist, Long Beach Employee Education Resource Center, Long Beach, California)
- **Daniel C. Garcia** (Graphic Designer, Long Beach Employee Education Resource Center, Long Beach, California)
- **Katie J. Fick, MS** (Research Assistant, James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital, Tampa, Florida)
- **Jeff Hall** (Production Sound Mixer, Salt Lake City Employee Education Resource Center, Salt Lake City, Utah)
- **Christine Kaelin, MBA** (Clinical Research Coordinator, NCRAR, Portland, Oregon)
- **David Lehman** (Executive Producer, Salt Lake City Employee Education Resource Center, Salt Lake City, Utah)
- **Marcia Legro, PhD** (Research Psychologist, Seattle, Washington)
- **Will Murphy** (Audiovisual Production Specialist, VA Portland Health Care System)
- **Kimberly Owens, MPH** (Clinical Research Coordinator, Saint Thomas Research Institute, Nashville, Tennessee)
- **Emily Thielman, MS** (Research Assistant, NCRAR, Portland, Oregon)
- **Dwayne Washington** (Audiovisual Production Specialist, VA Portland Health Care System)
- **John C. Whatley, PhD** (Project Manager, Birmingham Employee Education Resource Center, Birmingham, Alabama)

Also, thanks to Sara Ruth O'Dell, AuD for her continued support of tinnitus research and clinical activities at the VAPORHCS.

Table of Contents

Part 1. Introduction	1
What is Tinnitus?	1
Should I See a Physician?	2
Tinnitus at a Glance	4
How Can This Workbook Help Me?	6
Goals of Tinnitus Management (All Methods)	7
Part 2. Step-by-Step Guide: Using Sound to Manage Tinnitus	9
Tinnitus and Hearing Survey	9
Using Sound to Manage Reactions to Tinnitus	12
Environmental Sound, Music, and Speech	13
Sound Grid	13
Soothing Sound	14
Background Sound	17
Interesting Sound	22
Test Your Understanding	25
Develop a Personal “Sound Plan”	27
Key Points for Your First Sound Plan Worksheet	27
Ongoing Use of the Sound Plan Worksheet	27
How to Fill Out the Sound Plan Worksheet	27
Tinnitus Problem Checklist	29
Example of Completed Sound Plan Worksheet	30
Part 3. Step-by-Step Guide: Changing Thoughts and Feelings to Manage Reactions to Tinnitus	37
Relaxation Exercises	38
Deep Breathing	38
Imagery	40

Pleasant Activity Scheduling	44
Changing Thoughts	48
Changing Thoughts and Feelings Worksheet	57
Part 4. Protect Your Ears!	61
Standard Earplugs	63
Custom Earplugs	63
Hi-fi Earplugs	64
Electronic Earplugs	64
Earmuffs	64
Appendix	65
References	68
Copies of Sound Plan Worksheet & Changing Thoughts Worksheet	70

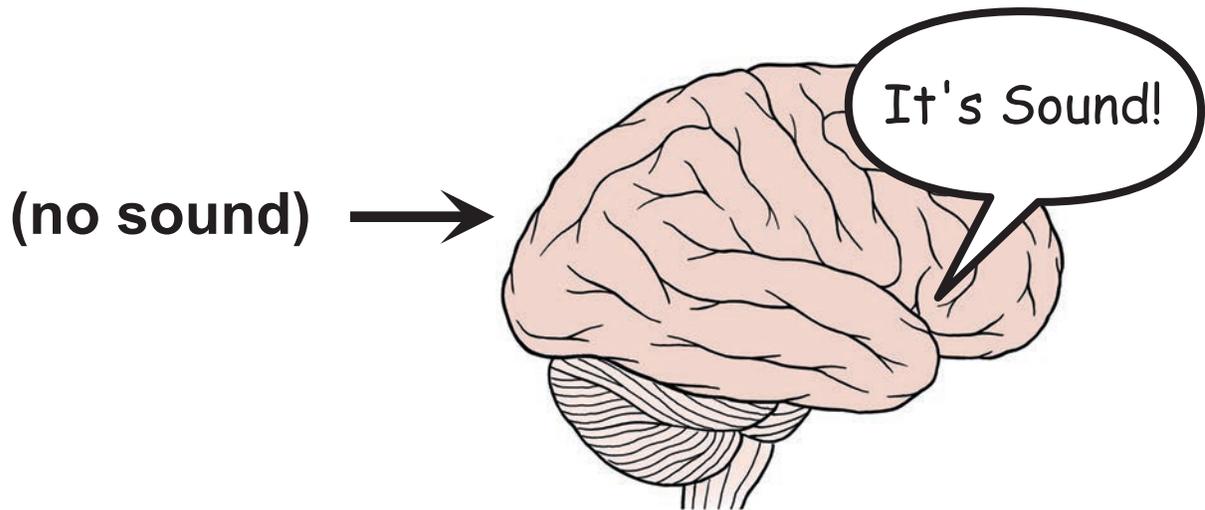
Read Me First

- *This workbook does not, and cannot, provide individual medical advice. It is for general information purposes only. The information is not intended to be a substitute for individual medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment by a physician who is aware of your medical history and has examined you. Do not rely on this workbook in place of seeking professional medical advice.*
- *If you notice any significant change in hearing, tinnitus, or ear-related medical problems, you should contact your primary care provider for referral to an audiologist or ENT (Ear, Nose, Throat) physician, as appropriate. Audiologists do not prescribe medication (drugs). Any medication concerns should be directed to your primary care provider or other physician.*
- *Please contact an audiologist if you have any questions regarding the information contained in this workbook, or if you have questions about tinnitus, hearing loss, or hearing aids.*
- *If you are a Veteran seeking a claim for service connected hearing loss or tinnitus, you should contact your VA Regional Office or Veteran Service Representative for information as to how to proceed.*
- *This workbook presents many different possible ways to manage reactions to tinnitus. In general, VA endorses the method of Progressive Tinnitus Management (PTM). PTM provides a hierarchical structure for providing clinical services for tinnitus. That is, patients should receive services that “progress” to higher levels as needed. Proper evaluation and provision of appropriate education are essential with PTM. Also, PTM is patient-centered and interdisciplinary, consistent with VA’s model of health care. However, VA does not endorse any specific device for tinnitus management. Any reference in this workbook (including photographs) to a device does not constitute an endorsement. All of these references are for information purposes only. Also, the methods and devices for managing reactions to tinnitus that are described in this workbook may or may not be available at your regional VA medical center. It is intended that PTM will be available at all VA medical centers in the near future.*

Part I. Introduction

What is Tinnitus?

Tinnitus is a ringing, humming, buzzing, or other sound in your head or ears that does not have an outside source. The sound comes from within your head. For most people, tinnitus is a constant sound. Tinnitus is not a disease - it is a *symptom*.



Should I See a Physician?

In most cases, having tinnitus does not mean that you need to see a physician. However, in some cases it is very important to see a physician. If you have tinnitus, you can use the guide below. It will help you decide if you need to see a physician or other health professional.

1 If you experience *any* of the following:

- Injury to your body
- Weakness or paralysis of any muscles in your face
- Sudden unexplained hearing loss in one or both ears

Go to Emergency Care or to an ENT (Ear, Nose, Throat) clinic *immediately*.

2 If you experience *any* of the following:

- Extreme anxiety or depression
- A current plan to end your life and a way to do it

Go to Emergency Care or to a Mental Health clinic *immediately*.

3 If you experience *any* of the following:

- The tinnitus pulses with your heartbeat
- You have ear pain, drainage from your ear, or if there is a foul odor coming from your ear
- You have vertigo (the feeling that you are moving or the room is moving when neither is moving)

Go to an ENT (Ear, Nose, Throat) clinic or to a physician *as soon as possible*.

4 If you have tinnitus, and *all* of the following are true:

- The tinnitus is a constant sound that does NOT pulse with your heartbeat
- You do NOT have ear pain, drainage from your ear, or foul odor coming from your ear
- You do NOT have vertigo
- You do NOT have weakness or paralysis of any muscles in your face
- You do NOT have sudden unexplained hearing loss

See an audiologist *sometime in the near future*. (An audiologist is a non-physician hearing healthcare provider.)

Tinnitus at a Glance

What Causes Tinnitus?

Anything that causes hearing loss also can cause tinnitus. The most common cause of tinnitus is loud noise. Other causes include:

- Injury to the head or neck
- Various diseases
- Too much ear wax
- Stress
- Prescription drugs

In many cases, there is no known cause.

Can Tinnitus be Cured?

A cure for tinnitus would mean that some treatment could silence it. Although research is being done to find a cure, there is no cure yet. There also is no safe and consistent way to reduce the loudness of tinnitus. We cannot change the tinnitus, but we can change our *reactions* to it. Changing reactions to tinnitus can make it less of a problem. The key is to learn how to *manage* our reactions to tinnitus. The goal is to feel better even though the tinnitus does not change.

Note: In this book we refer to “managing tinnitus.” We also refer to “tinnitus management.” Both of these terms refer to managing *reactions* to tinnitus. Again, we can’t change the loudness of tinnitus, but we can change how we react to it.

How are Reactions to Tinnitus Managed?

Methods that are used in clinics include:

- Sound-based methods (Tinnitus Masking¹, Tinnitus Retraining Therapy², Neuromonics Tinnitus Treatment³)
- Education⁴
- Counseling/Psychotherapy (example: Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy)^{5,6}

Each of these methods has been shown by research to help some people with tinnitus.

Progressive Tinnitus Management

The suggestions in this book are based on the method of Progressive Tinnitus Management (PTM).⁷⁻⁹ PTM was developed at the National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research. The method is “progressive” because not everyone needs the same amount of help. Some people with tinnitus only need basic questions answered. Other people need more than that. Still others need a great deal of help. With PTM, sound is used to manage reactions to tinnitus. However, PTM differs from the sound-based methods listed above. PTM teaches many different ways to use sound to manage tinnitus. Also, PTM teaches ways to change your thoughts and feelings to cope with tinnitus.

What About “Alternative” Methods?

There are many “alternative” methods, including:

- Acupuncture
- Hypnosis
- Vitamins and herbs
- Homeopathy

None of these methods has been shown by research to help people with tinnitus more than placebo.¹⁰ (A placebo is like a “sugar pill.”)

Isn’t There a Drug for Tinnitus?

All drugs used for tinnitus are meant for other problems - like depression, anxiety, and trouble sleeping.¹⁰ Some of these drugs can improve mood. A better mood can help to make tinnitus less of a problem. In some cases, a drug can reduce the loudness of tinnitus. However, drugs also can make tinnitus *louder*. Any use of drugs for tinnitus involves trial-and-error. Because of possible side effects, the use of drugs should be approached with caution.

How Can This Workbook Help Me?

There are three basic ways to manage reactions to tinnitus: (1) education and counseling; (2) using sound; and (3) changing thoughts and feelings. These are things that you can do on your own *if you know what to do*. You can learn what to do by reading this workbook.

1. Education

You may have been told in the past to “learn to live with it” and “nothing can be done.” This is not true. Doing the activities in this workbook can help you learn to manage your reactions to tinnitus and make it less of a problem.

2. Use of Sound

Most methods of tinnitus management involve *using sound in some way*. Part 2 of this workbook shows you how to use sound to manage reactions to tinnitus.

3. Changing Thoughts and Feelings

In Part 3 of this workbook you will learn:

- Two different ways to relax
- About planning pleasant activities
- How to change your thoughts about tinnitus

All of these are different ways for you to change your thoughts and feelings. Changing your thoughts and feelings can help you manage your reactions to tinnitus.

Goals of Tinnitus Management (All Methods)

There are many methods for managing reactions to tinnitus. These methods are not intended to make your tinnitus quieter. They are intended to help you feel better - even if it's just for a short time - without changing your tinnitus. The more you practice feeling better, the easier it will become to feel OK with your tinnitus just as it is. All of these methods have basically the same goals. They are to:

- Feel less stressed about tinnitus
- Have fewer emotional reactions to tinnitus
- Almost never think about tinnitus
- Feel like tinnitus has little effect on daily activities (concentration, work, sleep, etc.)
- Feel like tinnitus is not much of a problem
- Feel like there is no need for further help learning to manage tinnitus

All of these goals can be accomplished without changing your tinnitus. Go ahead and check the boxes above for the goals that apply to you. Use the space below to write down any other goals you have. Keep in mind that this workbook can help you with tinnitus problems, but not with trouble hearing. For help with trouble hearing, please talk to an audiologist.

What is *your number one goal* for managing your reactions to tinnitus?

Part 2. Step-by-Step Guide: Using Sound to Manage Reactions to Tinnitus

Tinnitus & Hearing Survey

Later on in this workbook, we will be discussing “Bob’s” problems with tinnitus and how he learned how to manage them. Bob first filled out the Tinnitus and Hearing Survey. His completed Survey is shown below. Please take a look at how Bob filled out the Survey. Then, answer these questions for yourself on the next page.

Tinnitus and Hearing Survey						
	No, not a problem	Yes, a small problem	Yes, a moderate problem	Yes, a big problem	Yes, a very big problem	
Bob						
A. Tinnitus						
Over the last week, tinnitus kept me from sleeping.	0	1	2	3	4	
Over the last week, tinnitus kept me from concentrating on reading.	0	1	2	3	4	
Over the last week, tinnitus kept me from relaxing.	0	1	2	3	4	
Over the last week, I couldn't get my mind off of my tinnitus.	0	1	2	3	4	
		1	4	3		
		Total of each column				Grand Total
					8	
B. Hearing						
Over the last week, I couldn't understand what others were saying in noisy or crowded places.	0	1	2	3	4	
Over the last week, I couldn't understand what people were saying on TV or in movies.	0	1	2	3	4	
Over the last week, I couldn't understand people with soft voices.	0	1	2	3	4	
Over the last week, I couldn't understand what was being said in group conversations.	0	1	2	3	4	
		2				
		Total of each column				Grand Total
					2	
C. Sound Tolerance						
Over the last week, sounds were too loud or uncomfortable for me when they seemed normal to others around me.*	0	1	2	3	4	
If you responded 1, 2, 3, or 4 to the statement above:						
Please list two examples of sounds that are too loud or uncomfortable for you, but seem normal to others:						

*If sounds are too loud for you while wearing hearing aids, please tell your audiologist.						

Tinnitus and Hearing Survey

	No, not a problem	Yes, a small problem	Yes, a moderate problem	Yes, a big problem	Yes, a very big problem	
A. Tinnitus						
Over the last week, tinnitus kept me from sleeping.	0	1	2	3	4	
Over the last week, tinnitus kept me from concentrating on reading.	0	1	2	3	4	
Over the last week, tinnitus kept me from relaxing.	0	1	2	3	4	
Over the last week, I couldn't get my mind off of my tinnitus.	0	1	2	3	4	Grand Total
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	□
	Total of each column					

B. Hearing						
Over the last week, I couldn't understand what others were saying in noisy or crowded places.	0	1	2	3	4	
Over the last week, I couldn't understand what people were saying on TV or in movies.	0	1	2	3	4	
Over the last week, I couldn't understand people with soft voices.	0	1	2	3	4	
Over the last week, I couldn't understand what was being said in group conversations.	0	1	2	3	4	Grand Total
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	□
	Total of each column					

C. Sound Tolerance

Over the last week, sounds were too loud or uncomfortable for me when they seemed normal to others around me.*	0	1	2	3	4
--	---	---	---	---	---

If you responded 1, 2, 3, or 4 to the statement above:

Please list two examples of sounds that are too loud or uncomfortable for you, but seem normal to others:

*If sounds are too loud for you while wearing hearing aids, please tell your audiologist.

I Completed the Tinnitus and Hearing Survey - What Does it Tell Me?

Sections A and B. Tinnitus problems are managed in a different way than hearing problems. The problems in Section A of the Survey are tinnitus problems. You can use this workbook to learn how to manage tinnitus problems. The problems in Section B are hearing problems. This workbook does not explain how to handle hearing problems. Any hearing professional can help you learn how to manage hearing problems.

Section C. The two questions in section C are about trouble tolerating sound. If you circled any number greater than “0,” then read the Appendix. If you circled “2” or greater on the second question, please talk to a hearing professional.

Grand Totals for A and B

- If the Grand Total for A is greater than for B, then you probably *have more trouble with tinnitus than with hearing.*
- If the Grand Total for B is greater than for A, then you probably *have more trouble with hearing than with tinnitus.*

Note: Hearing problems are often helped by hearing aids. Hearing aids can also make tinnitus less of a problem.

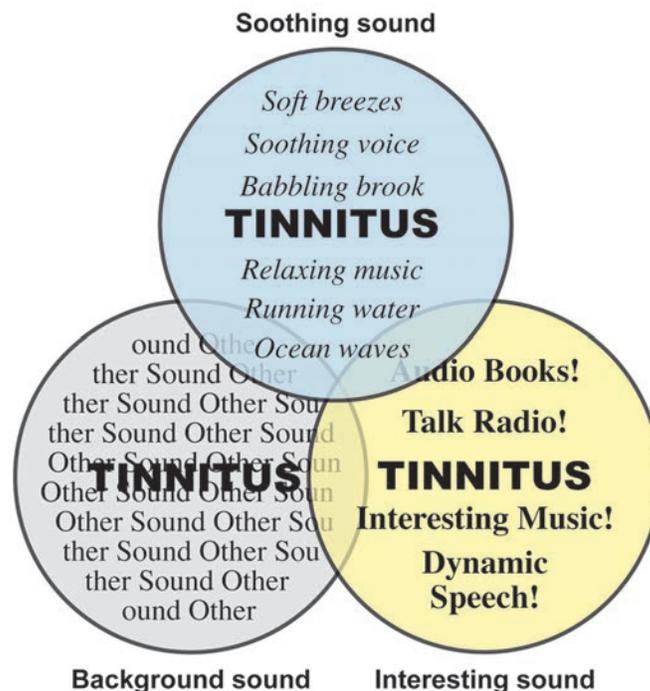
Using Sound to Manage Reactions to Tinnitus

In general, there are three *types* of sound that can be used to manage reactions to tinnitus:

- 1 **Soothing Sound** - *makes you feel better* as soon as you hear it. It helps reduce stress or tension caused by tinnitus.
- 2 **Background Sound** - *reduces contrast* between tinnitus and a quiet environment. It makes it easier to ignore tinnitus.
- 3 **Interesting Sound** - *keeps your attention*. It helps shift attention away from tinnitus.

Some types of sound can be used in more than one way at the same time. For example, interesting sound can help to shift attention away from tinnitus. At the same time it can help to reduce stress and tension from tinnitus. Some types of sound can be used in all three ways at the same time. The circles in the figure overlap as a reminder that *the types of sound can overlap*. Regardless of how you use sound, the goal is to help you live with your tinnitus more comfortably. We will now explain each of these three types of sound for managing tinnitus.

Three Types of Sound for Tinnitus



Environmental Sound, Music, and Speech

For each type of sound (soothing, background, interesting) you can use environmental sound, music, or speech. Please see the Sound Grid below.

Note: Environmental sound is any sound that is not music or speech.

Environmental sounds can be nature sounds (like the sound of ocean waves or insects), or manmade sounds (like fan noise and masking noise).

Sound Grid

The Sound Grid is shown below. It shows that each *type* of sound (soothing, background, interesting) can be environmental sound, music, or speech. This results in nine possible combinations. There is one checkmark on the Sound Grid for each combination.

Sound Grid

	Environmental	Music	Speech
Soothing	✓	✓	✓
Background	✓	✓	✓
Interesting	✓	✓	✓

Soothing Sound

What is Soothing Sound?

- Any sound that makes you feel better as soon as you hear it
- You can use environmental sound, music, or speech as soothing sound

How can Soothing Sound Help?

- By giving you a sense of relief from tension and stress caused by tinnitus

When can I use Soothing Sound?

- Any time your tinnitus bothers you

Ernest uses nature sounds from his tabletop sound generator to help him get to sleep. The nature sounds give him a sense of relief from stress and tension caused by tinnitus. The sense of relief makes it easier for him to get to sleep.



Lee plays recordings of Hawaiian music through his iPod while he is at work. The music gives him a sense of relief from stress and tension caused by his tinnitus. The sense of relief makes it easier for him to concentrate on his work.



Soothing sound

Photo of HoMedics sound machine shown with permission from HoMedics, Inc.
Photo of iPod shown with permission from Apple, Inc.

Examples of Soothing Sound

Environmental Sound as Soothing Sound

- Ocean waves
- Wind chimes
- Insect sounds
- Masking noise
- Custom tinnitus-relief sounds
- **Any** environmental sound that is soothing to you

	Environmental	Music	Speech
Soothing	✓		
Background			
Interesting			

Music as Soothing Sound

- Classical music
- New Age music
- Relaxation music
- Music with a slow tempo
- Hawaiian music
- **Any** music that is soothing to you

	Environmental	Music	Speech
Soothing		✓	
Background			
Interesting			

Speech as Soothing Sound

- Recordings of relaxation exercises (Imagery, Deep Breathing, etc.)*
- Recordings of meditation exercises
- **Any** speech that is soothing to you

	Environmental	Music	Speech
Soothing			✓
Background			
Interesting			

Using the Relief Scale for Soothing Sound

The Relief Scale is shown below. It is used to rate how much relief from stress or tension you feel when you listen to a sound.

No relief means that there is no change in the stress or tension caused by your tinnitus. *Complete relief* means that, with the sound, the stress or tension caused by the tinnitus is completely gone. Soothing sounds provide a sense of relief from stress or tension caused by tinnitus. You can use the Relief Scale to help you learn which sounds are the most soothing to you. It might take time and patience to find the soothing sounds that do the best job of helping you to feel better.



Instructions:

- 1 Choose a sound that you think will be soothing. A soothing sound will give you a sense of relief from stress or tension caused by tinnitus.
- 2 Adjust the volume of the sound until you find the level that is most soothing to you.
- 3 Answer the question “When I listen to this sound, how much relief from stress and tension do I feel?”



0

No relief



1

Slight relief



2

Mild relief



3

Moderate relief



4

Nearly complete relief



5

Complete relief

Write down the sound that you listened to	How much relief did the sound give you?					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
	0	1	2	3	4	5
	0	1	2	3	4	5
	0	1	2	3	4	5
	0	1	2	3	4	5
	0	1	2	3	4	5

Background Sound

What is Background Sound?

- Any sound that is neutral (not soothing and not interesting)
- You can use environmental sound, music, or speech as background sound

How Can Background Sound Help?

- Our brains are “wired” to notice contrast. There is a lot of contrast between tinnitus and a quiet room. Adding background sound to a quiet room reduces the contrast. The reduced contrast makes it easier to ignore tinnitus.
- Go to pages 19-20 to learn more about *why* background sound makes it easier to ignore tinnitus.

When can I use Background Sound?

- Any time your tinnitus bothers you

A constant background of sound can help you notice your tinnitus less often. Background sound should always be set at a comfortable level. The sound should become a natural part of your day.



Background sound



Janet keeps a tabletop fountain running on her desk. The background sound from the fountain makes it easier for her to ignore her tinnitus.



Aynun is using fan noise as background sound to help her concentrate on paying bills.

Examples of Background Sound

Environmental Sound as Background Sound

- Fan noise
- Waterfall or fountain noise
- Traffic noise
- Wind noise
- Radio static
- Fish tank noise
- *Any* sound that is neutral or pleasant

	Environmental	Music	Speech
Soothing			
Background	✓		
Interesting			

Music as Background Sound

- Classical music
- Guitar or piano music
- New Age music
- Music with lyrics in a foreign language
- “Elevator” music
- *Any* music that is neutral or pleasant

	Environmental	Music	Speech
Soothing			
Background	✓		
Interesting			

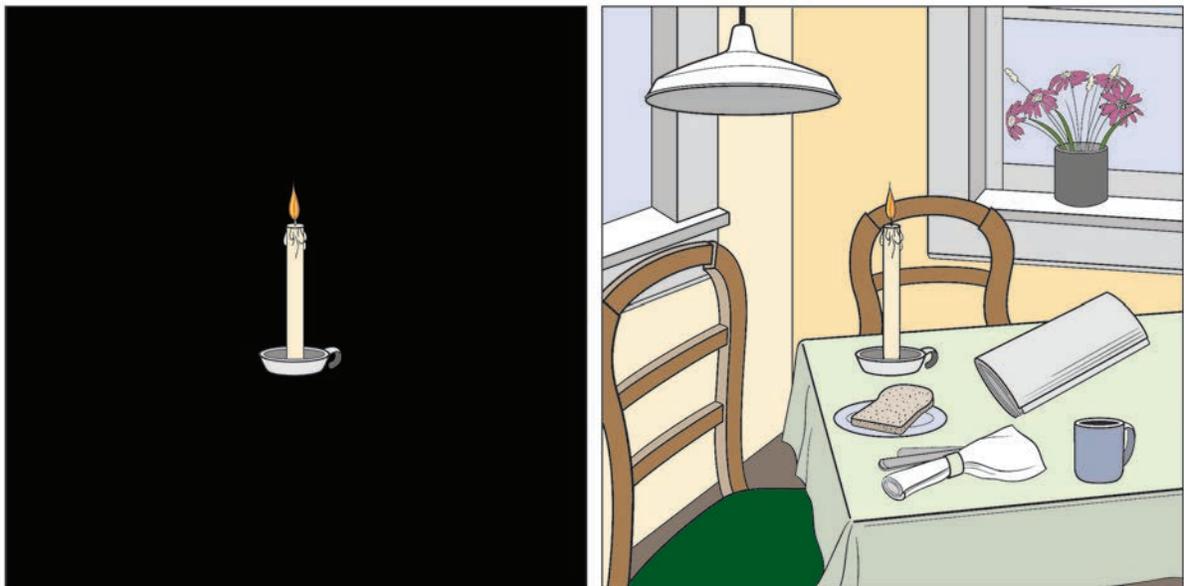
Speech as Background Sound

- Recorded crowd noise
- Background television or radio
- *Any* speech that is not interesting to you

	Environmental	Music	Speech
Soothing			
Background			✓
Interesting			

How does Contrast Reduction Make it Easier to Ignore Tinnitus?

Imagine a lit candle in a dark room. The candle is the only light in the room. There is sharp contrast between the bright candle and the dark room. The candle naturally attracts a lot of attention. Next, imagine the same lit candle, but now with the lights on in the room. The contrast between the candle and the room has been reduced. The candle is just as bright as before, but attracts less attention because now there is other light in the room along with the candle.



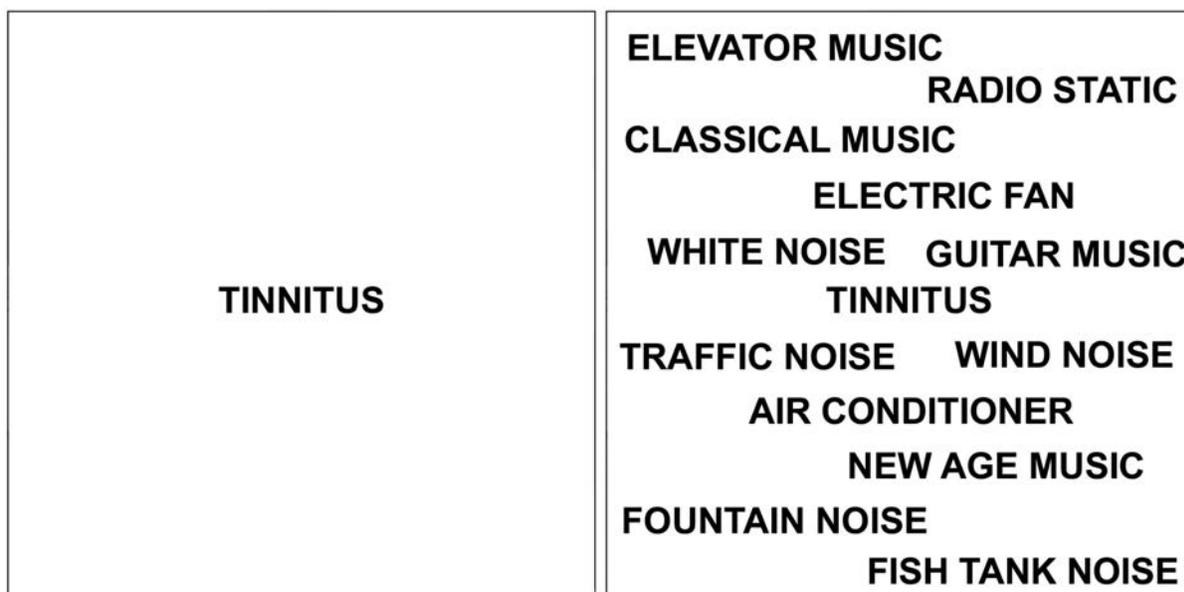
Tinnitus and Background Sound

Contrast reduction also works with sound. The sharp contrast between tinnitus and a quiet room *attracts attention*. Adding sound to the room *reduces the contrast* between the tinnitus and the background. The tinnitus might be just as loud as it was before adding sound to the room. However, *it is easier for the brain to ignore the tinnitus because there is other sound in the room*.



The figure shows how this works. On the left side of the figure “tinnitus” is the only word. When tinnitus is the only word it attracts a lot of attention. On the right side of the figure, there are many words. When there are many words “tinnitus” is easier to ignore, *even though it has not changed*.

Note: Sometimes background sound helps right away. Sometimes it takes weeks or months before you notice that it is helping.



Tinnitus Contrast Activity



Instructions:

- 1 Spend a few moments listening to your tinnitus in quiet.
- 2 Now turn on some background sound. The sound should be pleasant or neutral.
- 3 Adjust the volume to a comfortable level.
- 4 Notice the reduced contrast.
- 5 Reducing contrast makes it easier to ignore your tinnitus.

TINNITUS	<p>ELEVATOR MUSIC</p> <p>RADIO STATIC</p> <p>CLASSICAL MUSIC</p> <p>ELECTRIC FAN</p> <p>WHITE NOISE GUITAR MUSIC</p> <p>TINNITUS</p> <p>TRAFFIC NOISE WIND NOISE</p> <p>AIR CONDITIONER</p> <p>NEW AGE MUSIC</p> <p>FOUNTAIN NOISE</p> <p>FISH TANK NOISE</p>
-----------------	--

Write down the sound that you listened to	Write any comments you have about using this sound as background sound

Interesting Sound

What is Interesting Sound?

- Sound that keeps your attention
- Sound that you actively listen to
- You can use environmental sound, music, or speech as interesting sound

How can Interesting Sound Help?

- By helping you shift your attention away from your tinnitus

When can Interesting Sound Help?

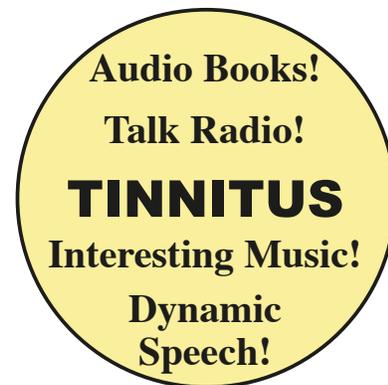
- When you do not need to concentrate on something else
- When you want to relax or sleep*

*Note: Interesting sound can be a powerful way to get your mind off of your tinnitus. This helps some people relax enough to get to sleep. It might not be helpful for others. Be open to using sound in surprising or unusual ways to manage your tinnitus!

James is listening to an audiobook on his MP3 player. Listening to an audiobook helps him shift his attention away from his tinnitus.



Patrick is talking on the telephone with a friend. Talking on the telephone helps him keep his mind off of his tinnitus.



Interesting sound

Examples of Interesting Sound

Environmental Sound as Interesting Sound

Active listening to:

- Whale sounds
- Bird calls
- Morse code
- Forest sounds at night
- **Any** environmental sound that is interesting to you

	Environmental	Music	Speech
Soothing			
Background			
Interesting	✓		

Music as Interesting Sound

Active listening to:

- Song lyrics
- Various instruments in a piece of music
- Live musical performance
- **Any** music that is interesting to you

	Environmental	Music	Speech
Soothing			
Background			
Interesting		✓	

Speech as Interesting Sound

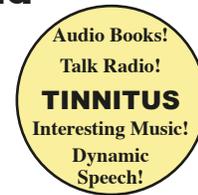
Active listening to:

- A friend
- Community lecture
- Audiobook
- Talk radio
- Podcast
- **Any** speech that is interesting to you

	Environmental	Music	Speech
Soothing			
Background			
Interesting			✓

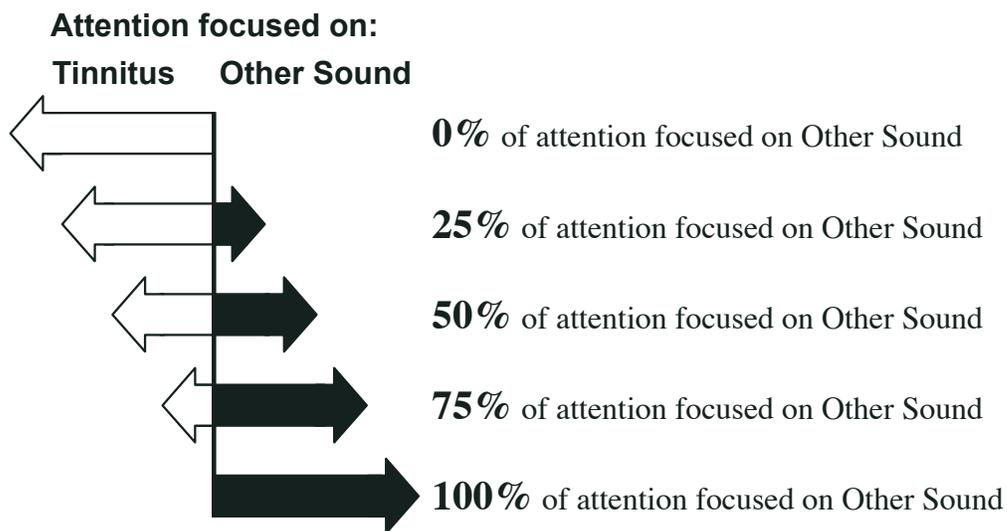
Using the Attention Scale for Interesting Sound

The Attention Scale is shown below. It is used to rate how well a sound keeps your attention off of your tinnitus. You can use the Attention Scale to figure out which sounds work best for keeping your attention. It may take time and patience to find sounds that do the best job of shifting your thoughts away from your tinnitus.



Instructions:

- 1 Choose a sound that you think will keep your attention.
- 2 Listen to the sound for at least 1 minute.
- 3 Choose the percent of attention focused on the sound while listening to it.



Write down the sound that you listened to	How much of your attention was focused on the “Other Sound”?				
	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%

Test Your Understanding

How is Martha Using Sound to Manage Tinnitus?

Challenging Situation: Martha reads a lot of books. She has always enjoyed reading in a quiet area of her house. When her tinnitus started, she felt tense whenever she tried to read there. This made concentration and reading difficult.

Sound Plan: Martha discovered that turning on soft classical music helped her feel less tense and more relaxed. Once she was feeling more relaxed, it was easier for her to concentrate on reading.

Is Martha using . . . Soothing sound? Background sound? Interesting sound?

Answer:

- Soothing sound, because the sound is giving Martha a sense of relief from stress and tension.
- It is also background sound because any use of sound reduces the contrast between the tinnitus and the sound environment.
- It is not interesting sound because she is not paying attention to the sound; also, she should not use interesting sound when reading a book, which requires concentration.

How is Ben Using Sound to Manage Tinnitus?

Challenging Situation: Ben is retired. He likes to relax after breakfast, but is bothered by his tinnitus.

Sound Plan: Ben enjoys listening to bird calls. He can identify many local birds by their calls. After breakfast he sits on his back porch and listens to bird calls. Other times he goes on-line to learn new bird calls. Listening to bird calls is interesting to Ben, and helps to get his mind off of his tinnitus.

Is Ben using . . . Soothing sound? Background sound? Interesting sound?

Answer:

- Interesting sound, because Ben actively listens to the sound, which takes his mind off of his tinnitus.
- It is also background sound because any use of sound reduces the contrast between tinnitus and the sound environment.
- It may also be soothing sound if Ben feels a sense of relief from stress and tension; this is not clear from the information provided.

How is Betty Using Sound to Manage Tinnitus?

Challenging Situation: Betty works at home. She spends most of her day working on the computer. The room is very quiet and her tinnitus makes it hard for her to concentrate. She tried playing music, but it was too distracting.

Sound Plan: She then tried opening the window. She could hear traffic noise from the freeway, which reduced the contrast between her tinnitus and the quiet room without creating a distraction. It is now easier for her to concentrate on her work.

Is Betty using . . . Soothing sound? Background sound? Interesting sound?

Answer:

- Background sound, because it is neither soothing nor interesting to Betty.

Develop a Personal “Sound Plan”

The Sound Plan Worksheet provides step-by-step instructions to create your own “sound plan” to manage your tinnitus. (An example of a completed Sound Plan Worksheet is shown on page 30.) Use the Tinnitus Problem Checklist (page 29) to list up to three situations when your tinnitus is bothersome. For each situation that you list, use a separate Sound Plan Worksheet. (Blank Worksheets are provided at the end of this workbook.) Each Worksheet helps you to develop a “plan of action” to use sound to manage your reactions to tinnitus. Try each plan of action for 1 week. Then note on the Worksheet how helpful it was.

Key Points for Your First Sound Plan Worksheet

Your first plan should be something you can do easily on your own. Create a plan using **sounds** and **sound sources** that *you already have*.

- **Sounds** can be any kind of environmental sound, music, or speech
- **Sound sources** can include CD players, tabletop fountains, radios, electric fans - anything that creates a sound

As you try your first plan, you will begin learning what is helpful for you.

- You can then make changes to improve your plan

Ongoing Use of the Sound Plan Worksheet

It takes trial and error to learn what works best in each situation. Use the Worksheet on a regular basis to change and improve your sound plans. Also, use the Worksheet to create new sound plans for different situations. Continue using the Worksheet for as long as your tinnitus is a problem.

How to Fill Out the Sound Plan Worksheet

See the example of a completed Sound Plan Worksheet on page 30. The example Worksheet was completed for “Bob,” who is described below.

Bob

Bob had trouble falling asleep at night because he was annoyed by the sound of his tinnitus in his quiet bedroom. He tried listening to books on CD, but that was not helpful. He tried watching television. That was only a little helpful. Then he tried listening to talk radio. That was very helpful.

He now listens to talk radio while falling asleep at night. Listening to the radio helps to keep his mind off of his tinnitus so that he can relax enough to get to sleep. He uses a small portable radio connected to earbuds. The radio turns off automatically after 60 minutes. He usually falls asleep with the earbuds still in his ears. He removes the earbuds when he wakes up.

Listening to talk radio helped Bob get to sleep at night. But when he woke up in the middle of the night, he did not want to listen to the radio. He decided to purchase a box fan that he placed next to his bed. The sound of the fan reduces the contrast between his tinnitus and the quiet environment. This makes it easier to fall back to sleep.

Tinnitus Problem Checklist

1. My **most** bothersome tinnitus situation is:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Falling asleep at night | <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxing in my recliner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staying asleep at night | <input type="checkbox"/> Napping during the day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waking up in the morning | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Driving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working at the computer | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

**Now, write your answer on #1 of the Sound Plan Worksheet.
(Copies of the Worksheet can be found at the end of this workbook.)**

2. My **second most** bothersome tinnitus situation is:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Falling asleep at night | <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxing in my recliner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staying asleep at night | <input type="checkbox"/> Napping during the day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waking up in the morning | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Driving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working at the computer | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Now, write your answer on #1 of a *separate* Sound Plan Worksheet.

3. My **third most** bothersome tinnitus situation is:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Falling asleep at night | <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxing in my recliner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staying asleep at night | <input type="checkbox"/> Napping during the day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waking up in the morning | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Driving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working at the computer | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Now, write your answer on #1 of a *separate* Sound Plan Worksheet.

Bob

Sound Plan Worksheet

1. Write down one bothersome tinnitus situation Falling asleep at night

2. Check one or more of the three ways to use sound to manage the situation

3. Write down the sounds that you will try

4. Write down the devices you will use

5. Use your sound plan over the next week. How helpful was each sound after using it for 1 week?

6. Comments
When you find something that works well (or not so well) please comment.
You do not need to wait 1 week to write your comments.

Soothing sound



<input type="checkbox"/>	Not at all
<input type="checkbox"/>	A little
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately
<input type="checkbox"/>	Very much
<input type="checkbox"/>	Extremely

EXAMPLE

Background sound



fan

box fan

<input type="checkbox"/>	Not at all
<input type="checkbox"/>	A little
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moderately
<input type="checkbox"/>	Very much
<input type="checkbox"/>	Extremely

adding fan noise helped me get to sleep and helped me stay asleep

Interesting sound



television
talk radio
books on CD

TV in bedroom
radio with earbuds
CD player by bed with earbuds

<input type="checkbox"/>	Not at all
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A little
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Very much
<input type="checkbox"/>	Extremely

talk radio helped me get to sleep, but I still wake up in the night

How do I fill out #1 on the Sound Plan Worksheet?

Sound Plan Worksheet					
1. Write down one bothersome tinnitus situation _____					
<p>2. Check one or more of the three ways to use sound to manage the situation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Soothing sound</p>  <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Background sound</p>  <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Interesting sound</p>  <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>3. Write down the sounds that you will try</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>4. Write down the devices you will use</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>5. Use your sound plan over the next week. How helpful was each sound after using it for 1 week?</p> <p>Not at all A little Moderately Very much Extremely</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>6. Comments</p> <p>When you find something that works well (or not so well) please comment. You do not need to wait 1 week to write your comments.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	

First, fill out the Tinnitus Problem Checklist (page 29).

Write one bothersome situation from the Tinnitus Problem Checklist at the top of the Worksheet (#1). (see below)

- If this is your first time filling out the Worksheet, use #1 from the Checklist.
- Fill out a separate Worksheet for each problem listed on the Tinnitus Problem Checklist.

Tinnitus Problem Checklist

1. My **most** bothersome tinnitus situation is: ↓

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Falling asleep at night	<input type="checkbox"/> Relaxing in my recliner
<input type="checkbox"/> Staying asleep at night	<input type="checkbox"/> Napping during the day
<input type="checkbox"/> Waking up in the morning	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning activities
<input type="checkbox"/> Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Driving
<input type="checkbox"/> Working at the computer	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Now, write your answer on #1 of the Sound Plan Worksheet. (Copies of the Worksheet can be found at the end of this workbook.)

2. My **second most** bothersome tinnitus situation is: _____

Sound Plan Worksheet

Bob
1. Write down one bothersome tinnitus situation falling asleep at night

2. Check one or more of the three ways to use sound to manage the situation	3. Write down the sounds that you will try	4. Write down the devices you will use	5. Use your sound plan over the next week. How helpful was each sound after using it for 1 week?	6. Comments																				
<input type="checkbox"/> Soothing sound 	_____	_____	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Not at all</td> <td>A little</td> <td>Moderately</td> <td>Very much</td> <td>Extremely</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Not at all	A little	Moderately	Very much	Extremely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Not at all	A little	Moderately	Very much	Extremely																				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Background sound 	<u>fan</u>	<u>box fan</u>	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Not at all</td> <td>A little</td> <td>Moderately</td> <td>Very much</td> <td>Extremely</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Not at all	A little	Moderately	Very much	Extremely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>adding fan noise helped me get to sleep and helped me stay asleep</u>					
Not at all	A little	Moderately	Very much	Extremely																				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interesting sound 	<u>television</u> <u>talk radio</u> <u>books on CD</u>	<u>Tv in bedroom</u> <u>radio with earbuds</u> <u>CD player by bed with earbuds</u>	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Not at all</td> <td>A little</td> <td>Moderately</td> <td>Very much</td> <td>Extremely</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Not at all	A little	Moderately	Very much	Extremely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>talk radio helped me get to sleep, but I still wake up in the night</u>
Not at all	A little	Moderately	Very much	Extremely																				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																				

How do I fill out #2 on the Sound Plan Worksheet?

For #2 of the Worksheet, check one, two, or all three types of sound. Choose types of sound that you think will help you with the problem listed in #1 of the Worksheet. If the problem you listed requires concentration, then do not choose interesting sound.

- A description of soothing sound is on page 14
- A description of background sound is on page 17
- A description of interesting sound is on page 22

Sound Plan Worksheet					
1. Write down one bothersome tinnitus situation _____					
<p>2. Check one or more of the three ways to use sound to manage the situation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Soothing sound</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/> Background sound</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/> Interesting sound</p> 	<p>3. Write down the sounds that you will try</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>4. Write down the devices you will use</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>5. Use your sound plan over the next week. How helpful was each sound after using it for 1 week?</p> <p>Not at all A little Moderately Very much Extremely</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>6. Comments</p> <p>When you find something that works well (or not so well) please comment. You do not need to wait 1 week to write your comments.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	

How do I fill out #3 on the Sound Plan Worksheet?

For each type of sound that you chose for #2, write the specific sounds that you will try.

- Ideas for soothing sound are on pages 14-15
- Ideas for background sound are on pages 17-18
- Ideas for interesting sound are on pages 22-23

Bob **Sound Plan Worksheet**

1. Write down one bothersome tinnitus situation falling asleep at night

2. Check one or more of the three ways to use sound to manage the situation

3. Write down the sounds that you will try

4. Write down the devices you will use

5. Use your sound plan over the next week. How helpful was each sound after using it for 1 week?

6. Comments
When you find something that works well (or not so well) please comment. You do not need to wait 1 week to write your comments.

Sound Type	Sound	Device	Not at all	A little	Moderately	Very much	Extremely	Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Soothing sound			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Background sound	fan	box fan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	adding fan noise helped me get to sleep and helped me stay asleep
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interesting sound	television talk radio books on CD	Tv in bedroom radio with earbuds CD player by bed with earbuds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	talk radio helped me get to sleep, but I still wake up in the night

EXAMPLE

How do I fill out #5 on the Worksheet?

- Use your sound plan for at least one week
- Rate each sound after trying it for at least one week
- Use the ratings under #5 to help guide changes and improvements in your plan

Sound Plan Worksheet																													
1. Write down one bothersome tinnitus situation _____																													
<p>2. Check one or more of the three ways to use sound to manage the situation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Soothing sound</p> 	<p>3. Write down the sounds that you will try</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>4. Write down the devices you will use</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>5. Use your sound plan over the next week. How helpful was each sound after using it for 1 week?</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Not at all</td> <td>A little</td> <td>Moderately</td> <td>Very much</td> <td>Extremely</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>			Not at all	A little	Moderately	Very much	Extremely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>6. Comments</p> <p>When you find something that works well (or not so well) please comment. You do not need to wait 1 week to write your comments.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>																	
	Not at all	A little	Moderately	Very much	Extremely																								
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																								
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																								
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																								
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Background sound</p> 	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Not at all</td> <td>A little</td> <td>Moderately</td> <td>Very much</td> <td>Extremely</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>			Not at all	A little	Moderately	Very much	Extremely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>																	
	Not at all	A little	Moderately	Very much	Extremely																								
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																								
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																								
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																								
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Interesting sound</p> 	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Not at all</td> <td>A little</td> <td>Moderately</td> <td>Very much</td> <td>Extremely</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>			Not at all	A little	Moderately	Very much	Extremely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>																	
	Not at all	A little	Moderately	Very much	Extremely																								
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																								
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																								
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>																								

Part 3. Step-by-Step Guide: Changing Thoughts and Feelings to Manage Reactions to Tinnitus

Many people put a lot of time, effort, and money into trying to quiet their tinnitus. This is normal because quieting the tinnitus would solve the problem. However, there is no cure for tinnitus for most people. Usually the more people try to quiet their tinnitus, the more frustrated they become. In spite of all of their efforts they usually end up feeling worse.

There are many ways to feel better without quieting your tinnitus. You've already learned about three types of sound you can use to manage your reactions to tinnitus. Using sound is something you can *do* to help you feel better. Using sound is a *behavior*.

In this chapter, you will now learn more behaviors to manage your reactions to tinnitus, including:

- 1 Practicing **relaxation exercises**
- 2 Increasing **pleasant activities**
- 3 Learning how to **change your thoughts** about your tinnitus

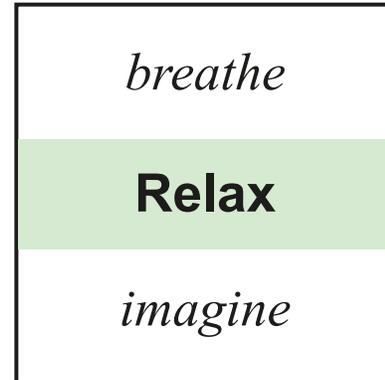
These may be new behaviors for you. You can learn and practice these new behaviors. Then you will have new skills to manage your reactions to tinnitus.

Note about sleep: Getting enough sleep can help you feel better and think more clearly. Getting enough sleep can make it easier for you to manage your tinnitus.

Relaxation Exercises

Many people with tinnitus say stress makes their tinnitus worse. Relaxation exercises can reduce stress. These exercises can slow down your breathing and reduce your heart rate. This workbook provides instructions for two relaxation exercises:

- 1 Deep Breathing
- 2 Imagery



Relaxation exercises

What is Deep Breathing?

- Focusing on your breathing to help you relax

What is Imagery?

- Imagining a calming and peaceful place

How can Deep Breathing and Imagery Help?

- By slowing down your body
- By helping you get your mind off of your tinnitus⁵
- By helping you feel relaxed and calm
 - Feeling relaxed and calm can help you:
 - Feel a sense of relief from tension and stress caused by tinnitus
 - Think more clearly and function better
 - Feel better overall

When can I use Deep Breathing and Imagery?

- Any time you feel stressed or tense

Prepare to begin Deep Breathing and Imagery

- 1 Find a relaxing place where you will not be disturbed. If needed, take the phone off the hook and ask others to give you this time alone. Loosen any tight clothing or change into comfortable clothes.

- 2 Sit in a chair with your feet flat on the floor or propped up. Place your hands in your lap or on the arms of the chair. Make sure you are comfortable.
- 3 Turn on a soothing sound. Avoid silence while you are practicing deep breathing or imagery. You might have a soothing sound on your Sound Plan (from Part 2 of this workbook) that you can use. If not, turn on music or other sound that helps you feel calm. If you prefer, you can use background sound while you are deep breathing.

Deep Breathing Instructions Step-by-Step

- 1 Prepare to begin by following steps 1-3 above
- 2 Place one hand on your stomach and one hand on your chest. Take a normal breath in and notice which hand moves the most. Most likely it will be the hand on your chest. This shows that you tend to breathe shallow breaths from your chest. Now try to take a breath from your abdomen (stomach). You might feel like you are pushing your stomach out - that is how it feels when you are more relaxed and breathing more deeply.



- 3 Close your eyes (if you are comfortable doing so) or look at an object in the room like a book on the bookshelf
- 4 Take a deep breath in through your nose - slowly for a count of three. (Remember to use your stomach first and let your chest expand naturally after that.)
- 5 Hold that breath for two seconds and then exhale for a count of three from your mouth
- 6 Repeat steps 4 and 5 at least five times
- 7 When you are ready to stop the Deep Breathing exercise, count back from 3 to 1:
 - 3 - Become aware of your surroundings
 - 2 - Move your feet, legs, hands, arms, and rotate your head
 - 1 - Open your eyes feeling relaxed

Imagery

Choose a Calming and Peaceful Place to Imagine

Before you begin, choose a place you will imagine. You can imagine any place that would be calming and peaceful for you. You should feel safe there.

When you are choosing what you will imagine, think about these things:

- **The place:** Where do you want to be?
Examples: the beach or in your kitchen
- **Sight:** What do you see?
Examples: trees, grass, the sun, or an oven
- **Smell:** What do you smell?
Examples: the ocean, pine, flowers, or cooking food
- **Sounds:** What do you hear?
Examples: birds, twigs cracking, soft waves, or boiling water
- **Touch:** What do you feel?
Examples: a cool breeze, the warm sun, or heat from cooking
- **Taste:** What can you taste?
Examples: salty air, sweet berries, cool water, or warm food

Imagery Instructions Step-by-Step

- 1 Prepare to begin by following steps 1 through 3 on pages 38-39
- 2 Take several deep breaths and shift your focus to the peaceful image you chose.
- 3 As you focus your thoughts on your peaceful place:
 - Imagine a path you travel on as you journey through your place.
Example: As you look back notice your footprints in the sand where you have just walked along the shore. Slowly, a wave moves in and washes away the sand.
 - Imagine what you hear, smell, and taste.
 - Imagine reaching out and touching things around you.
Example: Notice how the sand or a leaf feels as you hold it in your hand.
 - As you imagine your relaxing place, move deeper and deeper into the image. You should feel calm and peaceful there.
 - Notice how your body feels - you will want to return to this feeling next time.
- 4 When you are ready to stop imagining the peaceful place, count back from 3 to 1:
 - 3 - Become aware of your surroundings
 - 2 - Move your feet, legs, hands, arms, and rotate your head
 - 1 - Open your eyes feeling relaxed



Deep Breathing and Imagery



Relief Scale

The Relief Scale is shown below. Use it to rate how much relief from stress or tension you feel after using deep breathing or imagery. *No relief* means that there is no change in the stress or tension caused by your tinnitus. *Complete relief* means that the stress or tension caused by the tinnitus is completely gone. Learning to relax using deep breathing and imagery takes time and practice. You can use the Relief Scale to track your progress.

Instructions

- Get into a comfortable position
- Follow the instructions for deep breathing (page 39) or imagery (page 41)
- Fill out the chart below to track your progress



0

No relief



1

Slight relief



2

Mild relief



3

Moderate relief



4

Nearly complete relief



5

Complete relief

Date	Time of Day	Minutes Practiced		Relief
		Deep Breathing	Imagery	
Example: June 5, 2009	10:00am	5 mins	0	3
June 5, 2009	10:05am	0	5 mins	4

Pleasant Activity Scheduling

What are pleasant activities?

- Activities you *enjoy*
- Activities you *like* to do but do not *have* to do

How can pleasant activities help me manage my reactions to tinnitus?

- By helping you have more positive feelings
- By distracting you from your tinnitus
- By helping you feel better overall

golf, write, walk

Pleasant activities

dance, paint

Plan pleasant activities

What You Do Affects How You Feel

Some people with tinnitus feel like they can't enjoy life again unless the tinnitus is quieter or gone. Because of this, they may stop doing many of their usual activities - especially activities they enjoy. If *you* are doing fewer activities because of tinnitus, then you are more likely to be focused on your tinnitus, and you are more likely to feel unhappy. [Note: If you are stopping activities because of trouble hearing, then that is a separate concern.]

One way to start feeling better is to plan pleasant activities even when your tinnitus is bothering you. Pleasant activities can help you enjoy life and pay less attention to your tinnitus. At first, you might feel like you are “relearning” how to enjoy pleasant activities. The activities might be harder to enjoy than they were without tinnitus. With time, you can learn to enjoy the activities even with tinnitus.

Activity Planning

What kinds of activities fill your day? Are they all tasks you feel you “have to do?” Do you have any activities you enjoy during the day?

One way to increase pleasant activities is to *plan ahead*. This may sound simple, but most of the time we wait until we feel better to do something we enjoy. If you let *how you feel* guide *what you do*, then you may end up staying home and not doing anything. If you schedule pleasant activities you will find it easier to do something you enjoy. As a result, you may feel more pleasure!

We will ask you to keep track of your activities. This will help you be aware of how you spend each day. Once you see what you are doing now, then you can begin to change or increase your pleasant activities.

Consider these specific categories of activities during the upcoming week:

- 1 Activities you feel you *have* to do
- 2 Activities you *like* to do

Increasing Pleasant Activities - Step-by-Step:

Step 1: Track Your Activities. Use the “Track Your Activities” worksheet below. When you do an activity, write it down along with the day and time. Then, choose from the two categories of activities:

- 1 Activities you *have* to do
- 2 Activities you *like* to do

This shows the kinds of activities you are doing. If you don’t see many #2’s then you need more pleasant activities in your life! Plan at *least* one pleasant activity each day.

Step 2: Make a List of Pleasant Activities. Identify pleasant activities that *you* would enjoy. Use the “Make a List of Pleasant Activities” form below. Choose 10 pleasant activities that you would enjoy. These activities can be with other people or by yourself. Make sure that the activity is pleasant for you.

Step 3: Plan Pleasant Activities. Sometimes it’s hard to fit everything you want to do into your schedule. Unless you plan the activity by scheduling it, you may continue with your routine as it is. Try to plan at least one pleasant activity per day by using your own calendar or scheduler. Write down how long you will do the activity and when you will do it. These activities can be done alone or with other people. Just be sure the activity is pleasant for you.

Step 1: Track Your Activities. Directions: Write down your activities over the next 6 days. Fill in the **Day** of the week, the **Activity** during each **Time** frame, and the **Category** of the activity.

Day	Time	Activity	Activity Category <i>Have to do = 1</i> <i>Like to do = 2</i>
Example: Day 1 Monday	Morning	Example: <i>Went to work</i>	1
	Afternoon	Example: <i>Still at work, worked out at the gym</i>	1, 1
	Evening	Example: <i>Made dinner, cleaned up the kitchen, watched TV</i>	1, 1, 2
Day 1	Morning		
	Afternoon		
	Evening		
Day 2	Morning		
	Afternoon		
	Evening		
Day 3	Morning		
	Afternoon		
	Evening		
Day 4	Morning		
	Afternoon		
	Evening		
Day 5	Morning		
	Afternoon		
	Evening		
Day 6	Morning		
	Afternoon		
	Evening		

Total #1's = _____

Total #2's = _____

Step 2: Make a List of Pleasant Activities. Before you can plan pleasant activities, you first need to know what activities you would enjoy. Below are some types of pleasant activities. List only activities you would enjoy.

Type of Activity	Example Activity	Activity
Social	<i>Dinner with friends</i>	
Recreational	<i>Taking dance lessons</i>	
Sporting	<i>Playing golf</i>	
Creative	<i>Writing poetry</i>	
Educational	<i>Taking a history class</i>	
Solitary	<i>A walk in the woods</i>	
Artistic	<i>Painting</i>	
Pampering	<i>Getting a massage</i>	
Musical	<i>Playing the piano</i>	
Interest-oriented	<i>Collecting old cameras</i>	
Travel	<i>Going to Hawaii</i>	
Food	<i>Baking bread</i>	

[Note: these categories adapted from JL Henry and Wilson⁶]

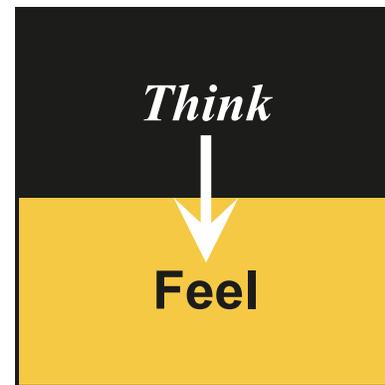
Step 3: Plan Pleasant Activities. The last step is to plan your activities. On your own calendar write down one pleasant activity you will do each day. After you do this for 1 week, look back at days when you did not do a pleasant activity. Ask yourself:

- 1 Did I do all of my scheduled pleasant activities each day?
- 2 Why didn't I do some or all of my activities as planned?
- 3 Did I notice my tinnitus less when I did these activities?
- 4 Would more activities help me get my mind off of my tinnitus?
- 5 Do I need to have more or fewer pleasant activities?

Changing Thoughts

What does “Changing Thoughts” mean?

- First you identify thoughts you had just before feeling bad
- Then you work on changing that thought to something that is more helpful



Changing thoughts

How can “Changing Thoughts” help?

- Changing your thoughts about tinnitus can help you change the way you feel about it

When can I use “Changing Thoughts”?

- Any time you feel tension or stress when you think about your tinnitus

Thoughts Affect Feelings

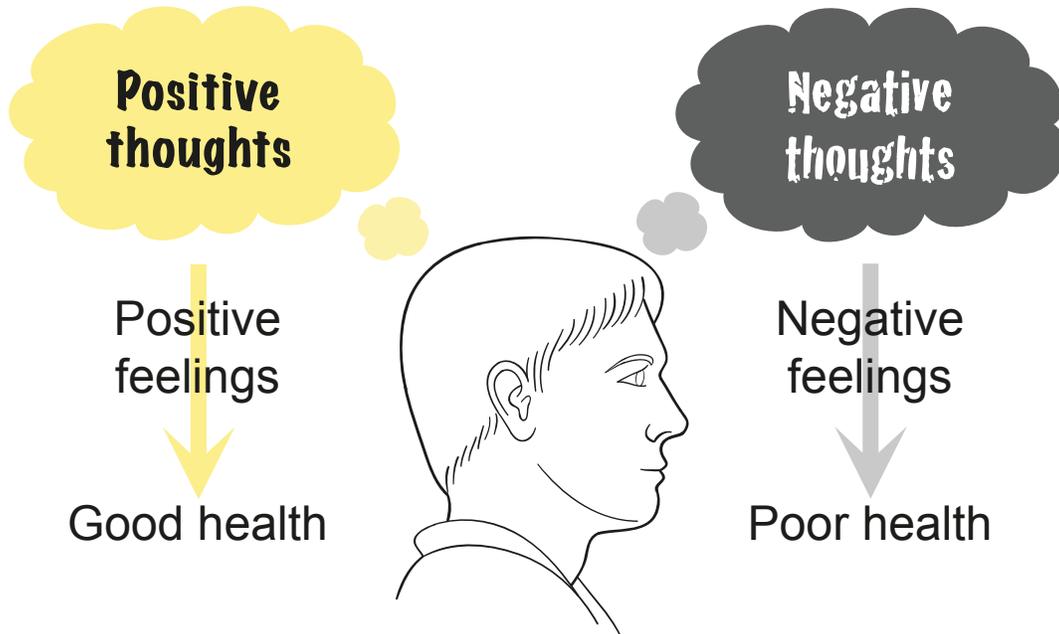
What you *think* affects how you *feel*. For example, imagine you are expecting guests to come to your house for dinner and they don't show up on time. The thoughts you have about your guests being late will affect how you feel (your emotions). If you think “it's rude to be late,” then you might get *angry*. If you think “it's nice to have extra time to clean up,” then you may feel *relieved*. If you think “they could have been in an accident,” then you might become *worried*. In this example, the event is the same, but your thoughts about the event are different. Sometimes the way you feel is caused by the *thoughts* about the event, not the event itself.

What thoughts do you have about your tinnitus? When you think about tinnitus, how do you feel?

Feelings Affect Health

What you *think* affects how you *feel*, and your *feelings* affect your *health*. Stress and negative emotions can lead to many health problems.² In times of stress our brains release hormones into our bodies. These hormones increase heart rate, blood pressure, and muscle tension. The changes caused by these hormones help us react to emergencies. However, if our brains release these hormones too

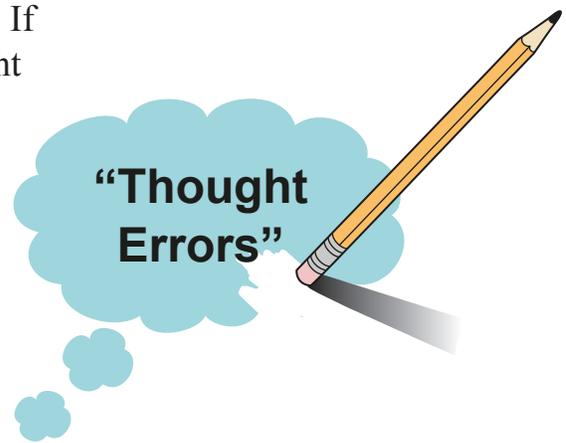
often it is bad for our health. People who are stressed for a long time may be more likely to get colds, heart disease, and other health problems. This is why it is so important to learn how to change your thoughts that cause negative feelings.



Thought Errors

Sometimes people get in the habit of having thoughts that are not helpful. Thoughts that are not helpful or unhealthy are called “thought errors.” You may feel bad or get upset out of habit and find out later that the reason you got upset was your own “thought error.”¹¹

All people make thought errors from time to time. Many people make thought errors that cause them to feel sad or upset. If you are aware of the most common thought errors, you can catch yourself and correct your thinking. Read the list of thought errors below. Think about which ones are familiar to you.¹¹ Remember: thought errors are very common.



Twelve Common Thought Errors:

- 1 All-or-nothing thinking:** When you see things in only two categories such as black or white.

Example: You see yourself as a failure if you are not perfect.

Example: “Nothing I ever do is right.”

Tinnitus example: “If my tinnitus is loud when I wake up in the morning I know I will have a bad day.”

Corrected thought: “I’m learning ways to have a good day even when my tinnitus is loud.”

My example: _____

- 2 Over-simplifying:** When you see one bad event as a pattern that never changes.

Example: You get on the wrong train one time and think, “I’ll never learn how to use the subway.”

Tinnitus example: “I was awake all night from my tinnitus. This will happen every night.”

Corrected thought: “Last night my tinnitus kept me awake, but most nights I eventually fall asleep.”

My example: _____

- 3 Focusing on wrong details:** When you pick out a single detail and focus on it. You don’t think about other more positive details.

Example: “I got a 60% on my math homework. I’m a terrible student.”

Tinnitus example: “My tinnitus made it hard to enjoy dinner with a friend.”

Corrected thought: “My tinnitus was really loud at dinner. However, it was great to see my friend again and to catch up.”

My example: _____

- 4 **Jumping to conclusions:** When you think an event was unpleasant even though there are no facts to support that. You might assume that you know what someone else is thinking or assume things will turn out badly.

Example: “If I go to the party then I won’t know anyone and will not have fun.”

Tinnitus example: “My tinnitus kept me awake last night. The next day I met a friend for coffee. I was really tired and didn’t talk much. I’ll bet he thought I was boring.”

Corrected thought: “It was difficult to be so tired all day. I told my friend about my tinnitus keeping me awake. He was very supportive.”

My example: _____

- 5 **Over-estimating:** When you think things are more important than they really are (such as your goof-up or someone else’s success).

Example: “She turned me down when I asked her to go on a date with me. I don’t know how to talk to women. I’ll be alone forever.”

Tinnitus example: “My tinnitus makes me moody. No one wants to be around me.”

Corrected thought: “Sometimes I’m moody and other times I am in a great mood. I have friends who know me and understand me.”

My example: _____

- 6 **Under-estimating:** When you think things are less important than they really are (such as your success or someone else’s faults).

Example: “I know I got a 95% on the test but I could have done better.”

Tinnitus example: “I know I learned how to get to sleep even though my tinnitus is loud. I also started using soothing sound for my tinnitus at work. Even so, I’ll never learn to deal with my tinnitus.”

Corrected thought: “I can deal with my tinnitus by making small changes. It may not be gone, but I don’t notice my tinnitus as often.”

My example: _____

- 7 **Assuming the worst:** When you think something is much worse than it really is.

Example: A woman who got a low grade on a quiz thinks it's the end of her college career."

Tinnitus example: "I'm going to become deaf from my tinnitus."

Corrected thought: "My doctor said tinnitus won't make me deaf. It just feels strange to hear this ringing in my ears all the time and not know why."

My example: _____

- 8 **Emotional thoughts:** When you think that your emotions show the way things really are. You might think, "I feel it, so it must be true."

Example: "I feel like I'm the only one who cleans up around here so you must not be helping."

Tinnitus example: "I feel like no one knows what I am going through with my tinnitus. I feel all alone."

Corrected thought: "People know what I am going through when I explain tinnitus to them."

My example: _____

- 9 **"Should" statements:** When you say "should" and "shouldn't" to try to get yourself to do hard tasks. These statements tend to make you feel guilty. Also included are statements with the words "must" and "ought."

Example: "I should eat healthier and stop eating food I like."

Tinnitus example: "I should not have to deal with tinnitus during the best years of my life."

Corrected thought: "Tinnitus isn't what I expected when I retired, but I can deal with it."

My example: _____

10 Labeling: Attaching a bad label to yourself or others.

Example: “He lost his keys so he’s stupid.”

Tinnitus example: “I can’t deal with my tinnitus so I’m a weak person.”

Corrected thought: “Sometimes it’s hard to deal with my tinnitus. I do my best to stay healthy and active. I practice methods for managing my reactions to tinnitus from the workbook. However, sometimes the tinnitus still bothers me. That is normal.”

My example: _____

11 Making Things Personal: You see yourself as the cause of some negative event when you are not responsible. You ignore other details.

Example: “My doctor was not nice to me because I was sick.”

Tinnitus example: “My tinnitus made it hard for me to enjoy the picnic. I caused everyone else to have a bad time, too.”

Corrected thought: “My tinnitus made it hard for me to enjoy the picnic. No one can have fun all of the time.”

My example: _____

12 Blaming: You blame others for your problems. You may also blame yourself for other people’s problems.

Example: “I didn’t get the job because you didn’t call to give me a pep-talk before my meeting.”

Tinnitus example: “My tinnitus wouldn’t be a problem if my wife was more supportive.”

Corrected thought: “It would be helpful if my wife was more supportive. Either way I would have to work at dealing with my tinnitus.”

My example: _____

Correcting Thought Errors

So how can you control negative feelings? Your thoughts determine the feelings you experience. You may not be able to change events, or tinnitus. However, the way you think about an event *is under your control*. Change your thoughts, and your feelings will change too. Next you will learn a step-by-step approach to changing thoughts.

Changing Thoughts - Step-by-Step:

Please use the Changing Thoughts Exercise form on page 56 to complete the steps below.

Step 1: Event. Identify what was going on when you started feeling bad - what happened? Sometimes it is hard to remember the event that was happening that made you feel bad until later. If this is the case for you, go to the second step and come back to this step later.

Step 2: Thoughts. Now try to write down a thought you had just before you started feeling bad or upset. What was the first thought that came into your mind? You may have had many thoughts just before you started feeling bad. If you had more than one thought, pick the one that made you feel the worst.

Step 3: Feelings. Write down any bad or upsetting feelings you are having. For example, sad, angry, jealous, or disappointed.

Step 4: Evidence *for*. Examine the thought you described in Step 2. Write down evidence that this statement is true where it says “Evidence For” below. Our thoughts often have some truth to them, but some have many more errors. Write down what is true about the thought in the “Evidence For” box.

Step 5: Evidence *against*. Again, examine the thought you described in Step 2. Identify evidence that this statement is not true. In the next box where it says “Evidence Against” write down reasons the thought may *not* be true. Can you identify any of the 12 thought errors from the list? (You can have more than one thought error in one thought.)

Step 6: New positive thought. Write down a new thought about the event that is more helpful. This step requires a lot of practice. With practice it will become more natural to create new positive thoughts. Sometimes it helps to say

statements that apply to many things. For example, “I am whole and complete,” or “I love and accept myself.”

New positive thoughts should be:

- *brief*
- *easy to remember*
- *thoughts you believe are true*
- *thoughts that apply to your life*
- *helpful*

Step 7: Feelings when you think the new thought. As you practice, pay attention to how you feel when you have positive thoughts instead of negative thoughts. Do you notice your tinnitus as much? Are your muscles relaxed?

Step 8: Picture yourself in the future. Look at the negative thought from Step 1 again. Think of a time in the future when you might have that thought again. Picture yourself thinking the positive thought from Step 6 instead.

Changing Thoughts Exercise

Directions: Keep track of three situations when you felt bad or upset during the week. Practice changing your thoughts in each situation using these steps.

Steps	Example	Your situation 1	Your situation 2	Your situation 3
Step 1: Event	<i>My tinnitus isn't getting any better</i>			
Step 2: Thoughts	<i>Why can't anyone help me?</i>			
Step 3: Feelings	<i>Helpless, frustrated and angry</i>			
Step 4: Evidence for	<i>I've been to so many doctors and still have tinnitus</i>			
Step 5: Evidence against	<i>I fell asleep easily last night. Maybe using sound is helping me, even if my tinnitus isn't any quieter.</i>			
Step 6: New positive thought	<i>I probably can't make my tinnitus quieter. Even so, I can find ways to feel better even if the tinnitus doesn't change.</i>			
Step 7: Feelings when you think the new thought	<i>Happier, more confident</i>			
<p>Step 8: Picture yourself in the future. Think of an event in the future when you might have the negative thoughts again. Picture yourself thinking the positive thought instead.</p>				

The Changing Thoughts and Feelings Worksheet

Next you will learn about the Changing Thoughts and Feelings Worksheet. You will use this Worksheet to develop a “plan of action” to change your thoughts and feelings about tinnitus. You learned three skills in this section (Part 3): (1) relaxation exercises; (2) pleasant activity scheduling; and (3) changing thoughts. You will be able to choose from these three skills when you make your “plan of action.”

Blank Changing Thoughts and Feelings Worksheets are in the back of this workbook. They are on the back side of the Sound Plan Worksheets. Steps for completing the Changing Thoughts and Feelings Worksheet are listed below. There is an example of a completed Worksheet on page 59. The example Worksheet was completed for “Joe.” “Joe” is described on page 60.

Steps for Completing the Worksheet

- 1 Use the Tinnitus Problem Checklist (page 29) to list situations when your tinnitus is most bothersome.
- 2 For each situation that you list, use a separate Changing Thoughts and Feelings Worksheet.
 - a Write the situation at the top of the Worksheet (#1)
 - b Decide which of the three skills you will use to manage this situation (#2 on the Worksheet)
 - c Write down the details for each skill you will use (#3)
 - d Write down how you feel after doing the exercise (#4)
- 3 Try each skill you chose at least three times over the next week (#4 on the Worksheet).
- 4 Rate how helpful each trial was (#4).
- 5 At any time, write down what works and what doesn't work (#5).

Ongoing Use of the Worksheet

It takes trial and error to learn what works best in each situation. Use the Worksheet on a regular basis to change and improve your action plans. Also, use the Worksheet to create new plans for different situations. Learning to change your thoughts and feelings takes time and practice. If the exercises don't help right away, keep practicing. They can become more useful over time.

Joe

Changing Thoughts and Feelings Worksheet

1. From the Tinnitus Problem Checklist, write down one bothersome tinnitus situation My tinnitis makes it hard for me to concentrate at work

2. Check one or more of the three skills to manage the situation

Relaxation exercises

breathle
Relax
imagine

- Deep breathing
- Imagery
- Other meditation

3. Write down the details for each skill you will use

Plan pleasant activities

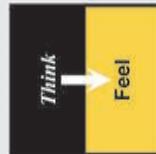
<i>golf, write, walk</i>
Pleasant activities
<i>dance, paint</i>

Activity 1 take a walk during lunch

Activity 2 _____

Activity 3 _____

Changing thoughts



Old thought I can't think about anything but my tinnitis

New thought There are many ways I can focus on things other than my tinnitis

4. Use your plan over the next week.

How helpful was each exercise?

Not at all	A little	Moderately	Very much	Extremely
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This helps!

This helps a little

This feels good

5. Comments

When you find something that works well (or not so well) please comment. You do not need to wait 1 week to write your comments.

It was easier for me to concentrate after taking a walk

I feel better

EXAMPLE

Changing Thoughts and Feelings Example: “Joe”

Joe works in an office on a computer all day. Because of his tinnitus, it is hard for him to concentrate on his work. Using the Sound Plan Worksheet, Joe found that keeping his radio on helped him to notice his tinnitus less. The radio is all he needs to help him concentrate during normal work days. However, when he is really stressed he still has a hard time concentrating.

Joe now takes a break when he feels very stressed and cannot concentrate. He practices imagery for 10 minutes and then goes back to working. Practicing imagery helps Joe get his mind completely off of his tinnitus for a short time. That helps him relax. Once he is relaxed it is much easier for him to concentrate on his work.

When Joe is especially frustrated, he tries to identify an event that made him feel that way. He then identifies thoughts he is having about the event. He writes down more positive thoughts and keeps them on a post-it note on his computer. This helps Joe have more realistic and helpful thoughts. As a result, he feels less frustration and stress.

Joe enjoys walking. He now takes a walk during his lunch. This pleasant activity helps Joe get his mind off of his tinnitus.

Summary

In this section (Part 3) you learned things you can do (skills) to change your reactions to tinnitus and to feel better. They are Relaxation Exercises, Pleasant Activity Scheduling, and Changing Thoughts. In Part 2 you learned about using sound in different ways to manage your reactions to tinnitus. Experiment with all of the ideas that you learned about in Parts 2 and 3. As you experiment you will get better at managing your tinnitus. You also will learn which ideas work best for you.

Some people may need more help dealing with their tinnitus and other problems. Contact a mental health provider right away if you feel very sad or worried. A mental health provider can talk to you about your tinnitus or any other problem. This provider can help you find more ways to deal with your tinnitus and problems in your life.

If you want to hurt yourself or are suicidal, go to your local emergency room immediately or call the **Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988 then Press 1, 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, or text (838255).**

Part 4. Protect Your Ears!

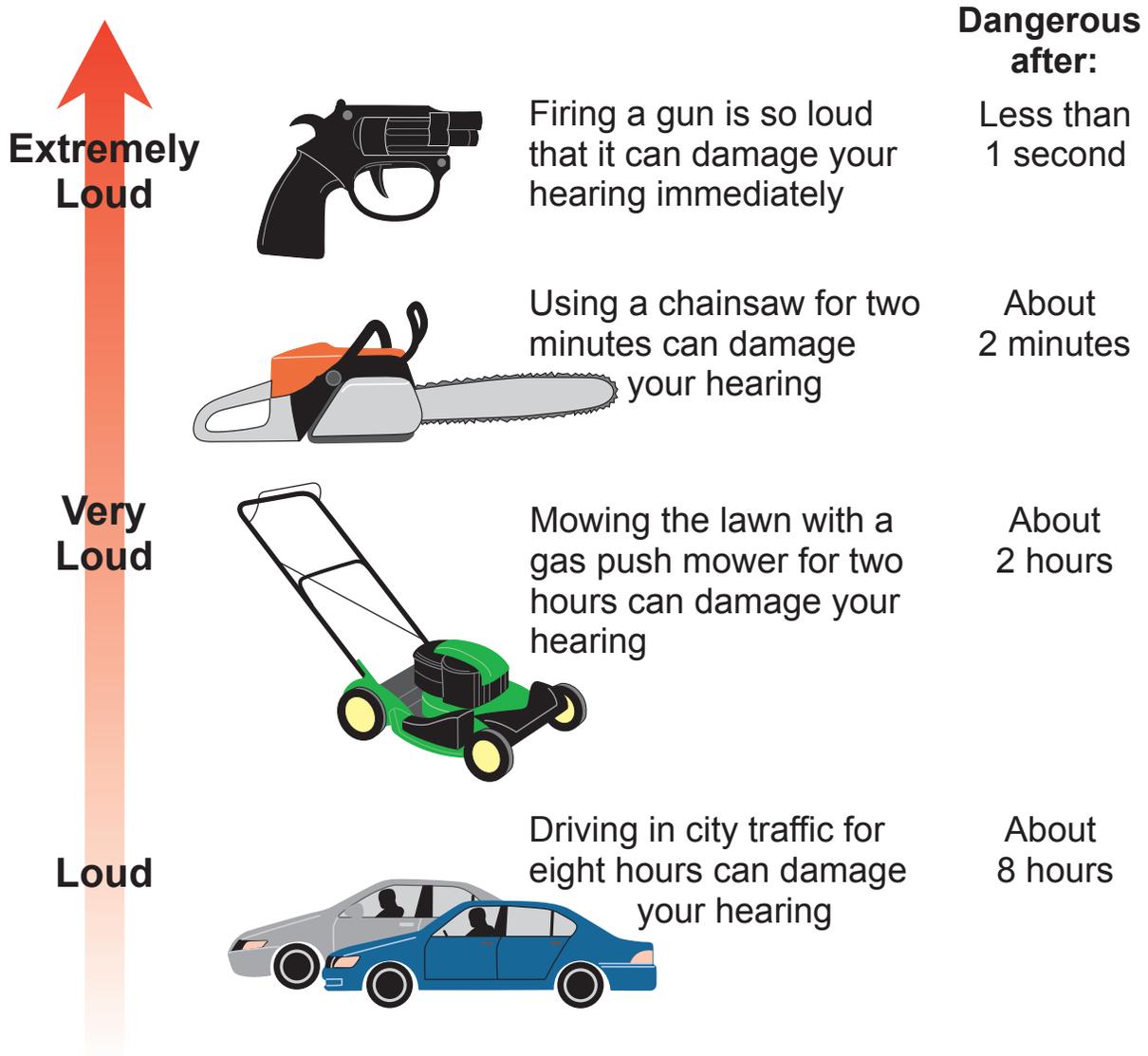
In Part 1 we explained that we cannot change the tinnitus. But, we can change our *reactions* to it. Parts 2 and 3 gave step-by-step instructions to learn how to manage reactions to tinnitus. Part 4 focuses on protecting your ears from very loud sound.

Loud noise can cause hearing loss and tinnitus. If you already have hearing loss or tinnitus, loud noise can cause *more* damage and *make the tinnitus worse*. The louder a sound is, the faster it can damage your hearing (see figure on next page). Power tools, lawnmowers, and chain saws are very loud. You should never use them without hearing protection (earplugs and/or earmuffs). Loud music, whether live or recorded, can cause damage. (If you listen to music for your tinnitus, you should always play the music at soft levels.) Even traffic noise can cause damage if you are exposed to it for many hours in one day. Driving with the window open for several hours at a time can cause noise damage, especially in the ear by the window.

You should always wear hearing protection when you are around loud noise. You need to find hearing protection that is handy and easy to use. There are many different types of earplugs and earmuffs. You can get them from:

- hearing specialists
- sporting goods stores
- industrial supply sources
- home improvement stores
- websites on the internet

The Louder a Sound is, the Faster it Can Damage Your Hearing



Standard Earplugs

Standard (non-custom) earplugs are low cost and “one size fits all.” Yellow foam earplugs are the most common. All earplugs can protect against loud noise but they must be used properly. Foam earplugs need to be inserted almost completely into the ear canal (with very little of the plug left outside of the canal - see the photo below). If they are not used properly, then they might not give you enough protection from sound. You can try different earplugs to find what works best for you. Some dealers offer “trial packs” with a variety of earplugs.



correct use



incorrect use

Custom Earplugs

Custom earplugs are custom molded to the ears. An audiologist can have them made for you. Custom earplugs usually are very comfortable, easy to use, and can be used for years.

Photo of custom earplugs courtesy of E.A.R., Inc.



Hi-fi Earplugs

“Hi-fi” earplugs reduce loudness equally for both low and high pitches. This avoids the muffled effect that is caused by most earplugs. Hi-fi earplugs were designed for musicians who need to hear music clearly. These earplugs also work well when you need to hear speech in a noisy environment.



Electronic Earplugs

Electronic earplugs allow you to hear soft sounds, but very loud sounds, like gunshots, are reduced. These earplugs are used mainly by hunters. Non-electronic earplugs also are available for this purpose.



Earmuffs

Earmuffs can be used *instead of* earplugs or *along with* earplugs. Earmuffs should be worn along with earplugs when you are around extremely loud noise like gun fire or chainsaws. It is important that earmuffs fit snugly around the ears to get a good seal. Wearing glasses or a hood under the earmuffs will cause them to be less effective.



All photos on this page courtesy of E.A.R., Inc.

APPENDIX

What To Do When Everyday Sounds Are Too Loud (not related to using hearing aids)

*Bill Smith is bothered by **everyday sounds**. (This problem is sometimes called **hyperacusis**.) Kitchen sounds and the vacuum cleaner are too loud for him. He is bothered by road noise when he drives. It seems like everything at church is too loud. What should Bill do? Believe it or not, being around more sound can make things **better**! And, staying away from sound can make his problem **worse**! What??? He should add **more sound**??? Keep reading and we'll explain . . .*

There are three things you can do if everyday sounds are too loud for you.

- 1 Keep yourself surrounded with sound that is comfortable for you
- 2 Listen to sounds that you enjoy as often as you can
- 3 Only wear hearing protection when you really need to

I. Keep yourself surrounded with sound that is comfortable for you.

Why should I keep myself surrounded with sound? Let's start by thinking about your eyes and how they adjust to light. Imagine sitting in a dark movie theater and then going outside into the daylight. Everything seems brighter to you than it does to people who were not sitting in the dark. Your eyes had adjusted to the dark and now they have to readjust to the daylight.

Your ears adjust to sound kind of like your eyes adjust to light. If you stay away from sound, your ears will slowly adjust to the quiet. After a while, everyday sounds will seem louder and harder to tolerate. Avoiding sound will only make the problem worse.

If you keep yourself surrounded with sound, your ears will readjust. It will slowly become easier for you to tolerate everyday sounds. You should only use sounds that are comfortable for you. It usually takes at least a few weeks of being around sound for this change to happen.

How do I keep myself surrounded with sound? You can use any sound that is not annoying. (The sound can be either neutral or pleasant.) Here are some ideas:

- listen to music at a comfortable level
- listen to radio shows
- play recordings of nature sounds
- keep a fan running
- use a tabletop water fountain

Another choice: Some people wear small instruments in their ears that make a “shhh” sound. These instruments are called *in-the-ear noise generators* or *maskers*. Your audiologist can tell you more about them.

2. Listen to sounds that you enjoy as often as you can.

Why should I listen to sounds that I enjoy as often as I can? We just talked about the problem of everyday sounds being too loud (*hyperacusis*). Many people also have another problem. They just *don't like* certain sounds, but *not because they are too loud*. (This problem is sometimes called *misophonia*.) If you don't like certain sounds, you should make a point of listening to sounds that you enjoy. Spending time enjoying sound can help you get better at tolerating everyday sounds that you don't like.

3. Only wear hearing protection when you really need to.

Why should I use ear protection *only* when I really need to? When everyday sounds seem too loud, some people start using ear protection all the time. Remember that avoiding sound will make the problem worse. Only use ear protection when sounds are dangerously loud or uncomfortably loud. *As soon* as the sound around you is at a safe and comfortable level, take the ear protection off. The goal is to wear ear protection *only when needed*.

Use earplugs or earmuffs *only* when:

- sounds around you are uncomfortably loud
- you are around dangerously loud sounds like:
 - lawn mowers
 - loud concerts

- power tools
- guns

Is there any research?

Yes. In 2002 Formby, Sherlock, and Gold* studied *sound tolerance*.

- There were two groups of people:
 - 1 One group wore earplugs for 2 weeks
 - 2 The other group wore in-the-ear noise generators (maskers) that make a “shhh” sound
- After 2 weeks:
 - The people who wore earplugs could tolerate *less* sound than before
 - The people who wore maskers could tolerate *more* sound than before
- This study showed that:
 - Adding sound makes it easier to tolerate sound
 - Staying in quiet makes it harder to tolerate sound

Bottom line

If everyday sounds bother you:

- Surrounding yourself with comfortable sound will help
- Avoiding sound will make the problem worse

How long does it take?

It can take weeks or months for your ears to adjust.

Talk to your audiologist if you have any questions.

*Formby, C., Sherlock, L.P., & Gold, S.L. (2002). Adaptive calibration of chronic auditory gain: Interim findings. In R. Patuzzi (Ed.), *Proceedings of the VIIth International Tinnitus Seminar* (pp. 165-69). Crawley: University of Western Australia.

References

1. Schechter MA, Henry JA. Assessment and treatment of tinnitus patients using a “masking approach.” *Journal of the American Academy of Audiology* 2002;13:545-558.
2. Henry JA, Trune DR, Robb MJA, Jastreboff PJ. *Tinnitus Retraining Therapy: Clinical Guidelines*. San Diego: Plural Publishing, Inc.; 2007.
3. Davis PB. Music and the acoustic desensitization protocol for tinnitus. In: Tyler RS, editor. *Tinnitus Treatment: Clinical Protocols*. New York: Thieme Medical Publishers, Inc.; 2006. p. 146-160.
4. Henry JA, Zaugg TL, Schechter MA. Clinical guide for audiologic tinnitus management II: Treatment. *American Journal of Audiology* 2005;14:49-70.
5. Henry JL, Wilson PH. *The Psychological Management of Chronic Tinnitus*. Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon; 2001.
6. Henry JL, Wilson PH. *Tinnitus: A Self-Management Guide for the Ringing in Your Ears*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon; 2002.
7. Henry JA, Zaugg TL, Myers PJ, Schechter MA. Progressive Audiologic Tinnitus Management. *The Asha Leader* 2008;13(8):14-17.
8. Henry JA, Zaugg TL, Myers PJ, Schechter MA. The role of audiologic evaluation in Progressive Audiologic Tinnitus Management. *Trends in Amplification* 2008;12(3):169-184.
9. Henry JA, Zaugg TL, Myers PJ, Schechter MA. Using therapeutic sound with Progressive Audiologic Tinnitus Management. *Trends in Amplification* 2008;12(3):185-206.
10. Henry JA, Dennis K, Schechter MA. General review of tinnitus: Prevalence, mechanisms, effects, and management. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research* 2005;48(5):1204-1234.
11. Beck JS. *Cognitive Therapy: Basics and Beyond*. New York: Guilford; 1995.

Sound Plan Worksheet

1. Write down one bothersome tinnitus situation _____

2. Check one or more of the three ways to use sound to manage the situation

Soothing sound



Background sound



Interesting sound



3. Write down the sounds that you will try

5. Use your sound plan over the next week. How helpful was each sound after using it for 1 week?

Not at all	A little	Moderately	Very much	Extremely
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				

6. Comments
When you find something that works well (or not so well) please comment. You do not need to wait 1 week to write your comments.

Not at all	A little	Moderately	Very much	Extremely
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				

Not at all	A little	Moderately	Very much	Extremely
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				

Changing Thoughts and Feelings Worksheet

1. From the Tinnitus Problem Checklist, write down one bothersome tinnitus situation _____

2. Check one or more of the three skills to manage the situation

Relaxation exercises

breathe

Relax

imagine

Deep breathing

Imagery

Other _____

3. Write down the details for each skill you will use

4. Use your plan over the next week. How helpful was each exercise?

	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> A little	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderately	<input type="checkbox"/> Very much	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Comments
When you find something that works well (or not so well) please comment.
You do not need to wait 1 week to write your comments.

Plan pleasant activities

golf, write, walk

Pleasant activities

dance, paint

Activity 1 _____

Activity 2 _____

Activity 3 _____

	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> A little	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderately	<input type="checkbox"/> Very much	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Changing thoughts

Think

Feel

Old thought _____

New thought _____

	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> A little	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderately	<input type="checkbox"/> Very much	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sound Plan Worksheet

1. Write down one bothersome tinnitus situation _____

2. Check one or more of the three ways to use sound to manage the situation

Soothing sound



Background sound



Interesting sound



3. Write down the sounds that you will try

5. Use your sound plan over the next week. How helpful was each sound after using it for 1 week?

Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	A little	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very much	<input type="checkbox"/>	Extremely	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>									

6. Comments
When you find something that works well (or not so well) please comment.
You do not need to wait 1 week to write your comments.

Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	A little	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very much	<input type="checkbox"/>	Extremely	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>									

Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	A little	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very much	<input type="checkbox"/>	Extremely	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>									

Changing Thoughts and Feelings Worksheet

1. From the Tinnitus Problem Checklist, write down one bothersome tinnitus situation _____

2. Check one or more of the three skills to manage the situation

Relaxation exercises

breathe

Relax

imagine

3. Write down the details for each skill you will use

Deep breathing

Imagery

Other _____

4. Use your plan over the next week. How helpful was each exercise?

	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> A little
	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderately	<input type="checkbox"/> Very much
	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely	

5. Comments
When you find something that works well (or not so well) please comment.
You do not need to wait 1 week to write your comments.

Plan pleasant activities

golf, write, walk

Pleasant activities

dance, paint

Activity 1 _____

Activity 2 _____

Activity 3 _____

	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> A little
	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderately	<input type="checkbox"/> Very much
	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely	

Changing thoughts

Think

↓

Feel

Old thought _____

New thought _____

	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> A little
	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderately	<input type="checkbox"/> Very much
	<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely	
