How can I manage my reactions to tinnitus?

You can use sounds to make life with tinnitus more comfortable. Soothing sounds can help you feel better without making your tinnitus quieter. Interesting or entertaining sounds can help get your mind off your tinnitus. Background sounds make it easier to ignore your tinnitus. Examples of these types of sounds are mentioned below.

![Soothing Sounds](image1.png) Relaxing music, Ocean waves
![Interesting Sounds](image2.png) Phone call, Audio book
![Background Sounds](image3.png) Fan noise, “Elevator” music

You can learn exercises to help you relax. Learning how to relax when you want to can help you feel better. You can plan pleasant activities even when your tinnitus is bothering you. Pleasant activities can help you enjoy life and help you get your mind off your tinnitus.

What you think affects how you feel. You can change how you think about your tinnitus from “there’s no hope for my tinnitus” to thoughts like “I’m learning new ways to feel better without making my tinnitus quieter.” With practice, changing your thoughts and attitudes can help you feel better. Ask your audiologist where to get help coming up with new ways to think about your tinnitus.

Searching for “tinnitus” where you download mobile apps will provide a list of apps for your smartphone that may be useful to you. Many free apps can provide soothing or background sounds, as well as breathing exercises and relaxation techniques.

What if I need more help?

If you need more help, contact your hearing health care provider. DoD/VA Audiologists are trained to help you with your tinnitus. Progressive Tinnitus Management (PTM) was developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs and is used by the DoD and VA.

In PTM, you learn how to use sound and how to change your thoughts and feelings to cope with tinnitus. Your audiologist can provide you with PTM materials, and can help you learn how to use them.

For more information about tinnitus, hearing loss, and/or hearing protection:

- Contact your local audiology or hearing conservation clinic
- Visit the following websites
  - VA National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research (NCRAR): ncrar.research.va.gov
  - DoD Hearing Center of Excellence (HCE): hearing.health.mil

This information sheet was created by the VA NCRAR in collaboration with the DoD HCE and members of the VA/DoD Tinnitus Working Group.

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