



# HOW DO I MANAGE MY **TINNITUS?**

There's a sound you may be hearing constantly, although no one else can hear it. That's your tinnitus.

Fortunately, sound therapy and relaxation go a long way to minimizing tinnitus.

In this ebooklet you'll learn how to reduce tinnitus and get closer to reclaiming your quality of life with sound and relaxation.



## SOUND THERAPY

Sound stimulation plays an important role in tinnitus management, because sound helps you relax and avoid stress. And stress is one of the most common factors associated with tinnitus.

Tinnitus is normally countered with amplified sounds from hearing aids, environmental sounds, and music or noise from noise generators. This helps minimise the contrast between the tinnitus and the surrounding sound environment to relieve you of annoying sounds.

If you use hearing aids, you may have one with a program to help with tinnitus relief. These programs can sometimes be customised to your specific hearing loss and take background noise into consideration when playing.





## RELAXATION EXERCISES

Stress can make it harder to cope with tinnitus, and it often causes the muscles to tighten. Relaxation exercises help your muscles untighten and effectively reduce stress.

To improve the effect of the exercises, follow these tips:

- Do the exercise 15 minutes every day
- Sit comfortably in a quiet place with no interruptions
- Listen to comfortable sounds if you find them helpful
- Wear loose, comfortable clothes
- Relax and take a few deep breaths before you slowly get up after having finished the exercise. It's okay if you fall asleep



## EXERCISE 1: PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Progressive muscle relaxation is meant to relax every muscle in your body, starting with your head and all the way down to your feet.

As you progress, focus on the muscles in the specific area only. Inhale and tighten the muscles as hard as you can for about eight seconds. Then release them by suddenly letting go. Let the pain flow out of the muscles while you slowly exhale.

### Here's a progression you can follow:

- Head (facial grimace), neck and shoulders, chest and stomach
- Right upper arm and right hand, left upper arm and left hand
- Buttocks, right upper leg and right foot, left upper leg and left foot
- Relax for about 10-15 seconds and repeat the progression. The entire exercise should take about five minutes
- When finished, count backwards from 20 and slowly get up




## EXERCISE 2:

# DEEP BREATHING AND IMAGERY

Deep breathing helps calm your nervous system and your body and takes only five to ten minutes.

Try to complete this cycle 20 times:

- Take a few deep, rhythmic breaths
- Exhale completely through your mouth
- Inhale through your nose for four seconds (count “one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three, one thousand four”)
- Hold your breath for four seconds
- Exhale through your mouth for six to eight seconds



Now you have achieved a state of relaxation with your deep breathing. Keep your eyes closed and continue the deep breathing.

- Now, imagine yourself in the most relaxing environment possible. That could be lying on a beach, floating in the water, soaring in the sky – whatever relaxes you
  - Try to stimulate all your senses. Imagine feeling the air on your skin, smell the fresh ocean or forest, taste your favourite beverage or food, and hear the relaxing sounds around your imaginary place. You can also listen to sounds made specifically for tinnitus relief
  - When you're finished, count backwards from 20 and slowly get up
- This exercise can also be beneficial after progressive muscle relaxation.





## TIPS FOR **REDUCING** SLEEP PROBLEMS

Adults need on average eight hours of sleep. But one of the most common problems among people with tinnitus is difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, and that affects your ability to cope with tinnitus.

There are many things that influence how well you sleep, like what you drink or do before you go to bed.

On the next pages you'll find a checklist to help you manage sleep problems.



## CHECKLIST TO MANAGE **SLEEP PROBLEMS**

- Maintain a standard bedtime and set your alarm for the same time every day
- Walk or exercise for ten minutes a day, but not right before going to sleep
- Close your curtains or drapes and keep your bedroom dark enough to sleep and at a comfortable temperature
- Don't watch TV, eat or read in bed
- Sleep on your back or on your side. Try to avoid sleeping on your stomach
- Have a set pre-bedtime routine. Start relaxing as you go through your routine; for example take a warm bath
- When you go to bed, take a deep breath and just relax. Feel your muscles relax and focus on pleasant thoughts
- Use a fan or white noise machine to counter your tinnitus
- Don't engage in any activities before bed that stimulate your body or your mind – for example, watching TV or playing a game
- Avoid food and drinks that contain caffeine. Note that caffeine is present in many things like soft drinks, tea and chocolate candy
- Refrain from drinking alcohol an hour or two before going to bed
- Don't take a late afternoon or early evening nap. If you find yourself extremely tired in the afternoon, take a brisk walk instead

If you still have problems falling asleep, don't lie awake for more than half an hour. If you find yourself wide awake, get out of bed and do something quietly. Only go to bed when you're relaxed and ready to sleep.







# CONSULT A **HEARING CARE** PROFESSIONAL

Relaxation exercises can be very beneficial and so can sound therapy. But they both work best in combination with support from a hearing care professional with tinnitus experience.

Find your local hearing care professional

SHOP FINDER

Download Widex ZEN Tinnitus app for comforting sounds



**WIDEX**<sup>®</sup>

At Widex we know that hearing loss is complicated. Every case is individual, every solution unique. That's why we continuously search for the most natural and personalized solution for each individual hearing loss.