

TINNITUS

RINGING IN THE EARS



ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF SPEECH AND HEARING
Manasagangothri, Mysore - 570 006

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RINGING IN THE EARS

- Do you hear a ringing, roaring, clicking, or hissing sound in your ears even when no sound is present externally?
- Do you hear this sound often or all the time?
- Does the sound bother you a lot?

If you answer 'yes' to any of these questions, you may have tinnitus (tin-NY-tus). Tinnitus means ringing in the ear. The noise can be intermittent or constant, and it can be mild or at a life-shattering level. It can strike people of all ages.

Tinnitus is associated with many forms of hearing loss. It can also be associated with other health problems. The noise may be loud or soft, of a low pitch or high pitch. You may hear it in one or both ears. When the ringing is constant, it can be irritating and distracting.

What causes tinnitus?

Tinnitus may be caused by:

- Exposure to loud noise for a long time (or one extreme incident)
- Medical conditions like
 - o Tumours
 - o Heart problems
 - o Jaw or neck problems
 - o Thyroid problems
 - o Diabetes
 - o Poor blood circulation
 - o High/low blood pressure
 - o Head injury
- Some medicines
 - o Antibiotics
 - o Anti-inflammatories
 - o Sedatives
 - o Antidepressants
 - o Aspirin
- Allergies
- Impacted wax in the ear

Can Other People Hear the Noise in My Ears?

Not usually, but sometimes they are able to hear a certain type of tinnitus called "objective tinnitus." Another type of tinnitus is "subjective tinnitus," the noise only you can hear.

What are the effects of tinnitus?

Tinnitus had been known to cause emotional problems, ranging from mild irritation to suicidal depression. The various effects tinnitus has on people include:

1. Poor concentration
2. Disrupted sleep patterns
3. Frustration and anger
4. Reduced patience

What treatment is available for tinnitus?

Although there is no cure for tinnitus, there are several treatments that may give you some relief. The cause of the tinnitus needs to be evaluated and removal of cause would help to reduce tinnitus. Not every treatment works for everyone, so one may need to try several techniques to find the most appropriate.

Some forms of treatment include

- **Masking -**

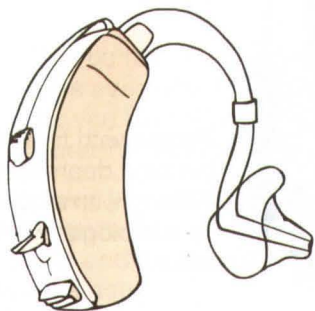
Masking involves using external noise to cover the tinnitus noise in the ear. Tinnitus is usually more disturbing in quiet surroundings. Another constant sound at a low level, such as a ticking clock or radio static (white noise), may mask the tinnitus and make it less noticeable.

- **Medicine or drug therapy**



Some medicines may reduce the effect of tinnitus. However, only prescribed medicines should be used. For further details, consult a physician/ ENT doctor.

- **Hearing Aids**



Many people with tinnitus also have a hearing loss. Wearing a hearing aid makes it easier for some people to hear the sounds they need to hear by making them louder. The better you hear other people talking or the music you like, the less you notice your tinnitus. One should consult a hearing care professional/audiologist for the best solution.

- **Tinnitus maskers**

Some people sleep better when they use masking noise. Listening to constant sound at a low volume on the radio or using bedside maskers can help. These are devices you can put by your bed instead of behind your ear. They can help you ignore your tinnitus and fall asleep.

- **Tinnitus retraining therapy**

This treatment, usually administered by a trained professional, uses a combination of low level, broad-band noise and counseling to the person to get used to the tinnitus (habituation).

Audiologists help you to deal with your tinnitus. You may also use maskers to make your tinnitus less noticeable. After a while, some people learn to avoid thinking about their tinnitus. It takes time for this treatment to work, but it can be very helpful.

- **Relaxing**



Learning how to relax is very helpful if the noise in your ears frustrates you. Stress makes tinnitus seem worse. By relaxing, you have a chance to rest better.

- **Counseling**



People with tinnitus may become depressed. Talking with a counselor or audiologist will be helpful.

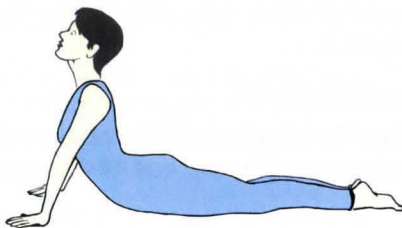
What can I do to help myself?

1. Learn to ignore your tinnitus
2. Listening to music/recorded nature sounds may be useful
3. Avoid exposure to loud noise
4. If you are exposed to noise at home or at work, wear protective devices like ear plugs or ear muffs to protect your hearing
5. Avoid substances that may make your tinnitus worse:
 - a. Alcohol
 - b. Tobacco
 - c. Caffeine (coffee/tea)



6. Learn to relax
7. Keep your mind occupied with work or hobbies
8. Maintain a good sleeping pattern

9. Exercise regularly



1. Avoid doing things that make you very tired
2. If you find it difficult to understand what people are saying, ask them to face you when they speak, so you can see their faces. Seeing their expressions and lip movements might help you
3. Ask people to talk louder and more clearly, but not shout.

Consult an audiologist or an ENT specialist for help. They can help you choose the best way to overcome tinnitus.

If you have any questions/comments, or need any help, feel free to contact us:

All India Institute of Speech and Hearing,
Manasagangothri,
Mysore- 570 006

Ph. No : (0821)- 2514449, 2514618

Fax : 0821-2510515

Email : aiish_dir@yahoo.com

Working hours : 9.00 am to 5.30 pm- Monday to Friday
(Except on Central Govt Holidays)