



Tinnitus Awareness Week

7th - 13th February 2022



Optima
Health



What is tinnitus?

Tinnitus is the name given to the perception of hearing noises within your ears or head that have not come from an external source.

Tinnitus is a common condition, with around **1 in 8 adults** having the condition all the time or on a regular basis.

The type of sound can differ from person to person, some examples include ringing, hissing, humming and grinding. Sometimes people experience more than one type of sound. It can be short-term or long-term, appearing constantly or intermittently.

Read on or click the links below to explore:



CAUSES LINKED TO TINNITUS



SELF-CARE LIVING WITH TINNITUS



TREATMENTS



PROTECTING YOUR HEARING

Causes linked to tinnitus

It's not always clear what causes tinnitus, as it's not a disease or illness. It's not usually a sign of anything serious. Sometimes it can be a symptom of another underlying condition, to do with physical or mental health. Below are some factors often linked to tinnitus:

Exposure to loud noises

Some form of hearing loss

Ménière's disease

A side effect to prescription medicine

Conditions such as diabetes, thyroid disorders or multiple sclerosis

Depression or anxiety

When to seek medical help:

The NHS recommends seeing your GP if you have: tinnitus regularly or constantly, your tinnitus is getting worse, your tinnitus is bothering you (for example, it's affecting your sleep or concentration, or is making you feel anxious and depressed) or you have tinnitus that beats in time with your pulse.

Go to A&E or call 999: if you have tinnitus after a head injury, or with sudden hearing loss, weakness in the muscles of your face, or a spinning sensation (vertigo).

Self-care living with tinnitus

Having tinnitus may at times feel distracting and even have an impact on your quality of life. The good news is that there are things you can try to help manage this condition, below are some ideas:



Try talking to someone about how you are feeling - perhaps a family member, friend, or someone who has experience of living with tinnitus themselves.



Try to avoid things that can make tinnitus worse - such as stress or loud background noises.



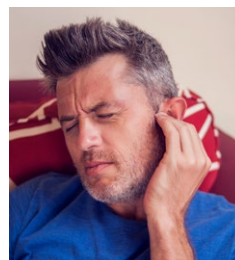
Try some relaxation techniques - these could include yoga, breathing exercises and guided meditations.



Reach out to a charity or support group for further advice - there are **tinnitus support groups** around the country and you can call the **British Tinnitus Association** helpline on 0800 018 0527 (open Mon-Fri, 9am - 5pm).

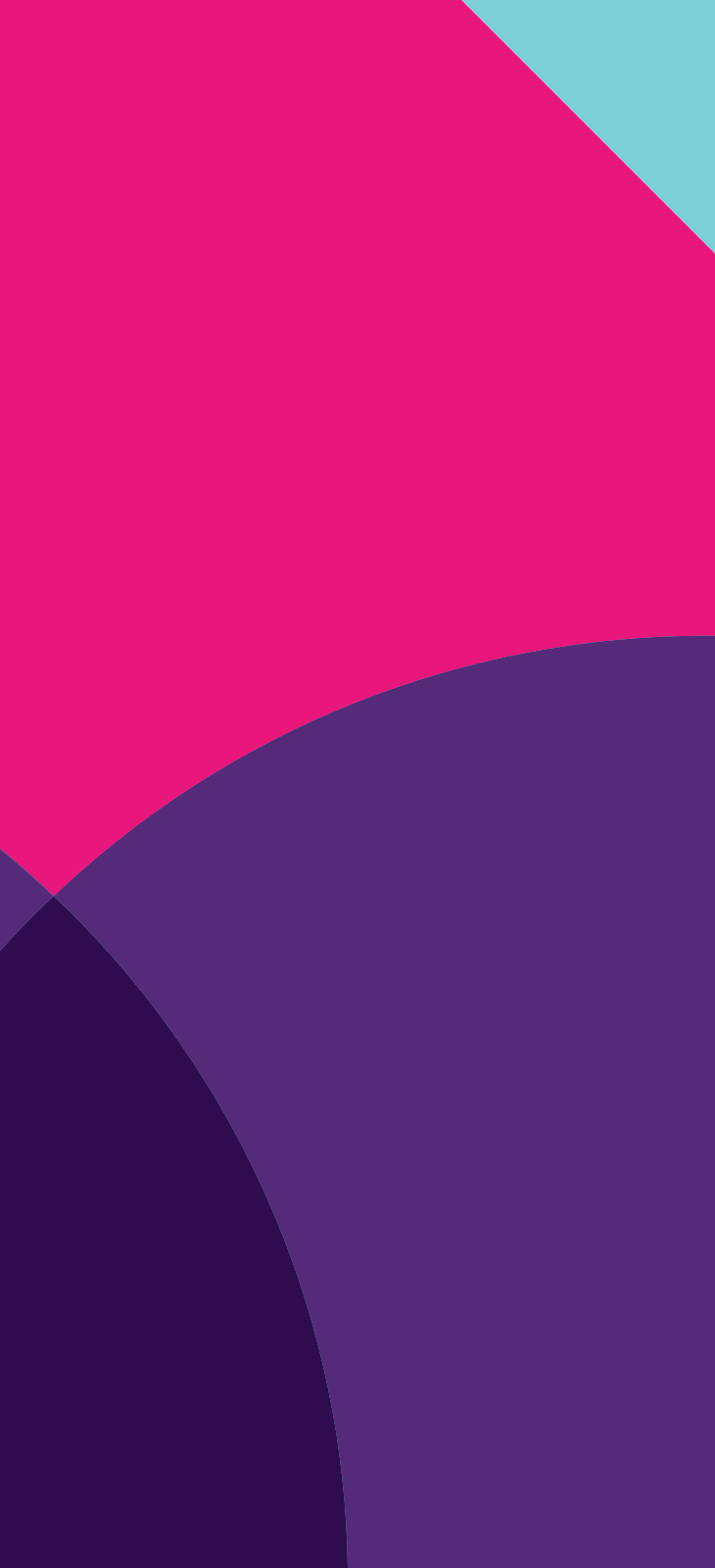


Try to find ways to improve your sleep - such as going to bed at the same time each day, avoiding caffeine in the evening and trying to unwind at least an hour before going to bed.



Try not to focus on the tinnitus noises you hear - perhaps easier said than done, but intentionally focusing on the tinnitus sound may end up making it worse and cause you more distress.

The **British Tinnitus Association** include further tips and advice for managing this condition. The **RNID** are another charity offering support on hearing loss and tinnitus.



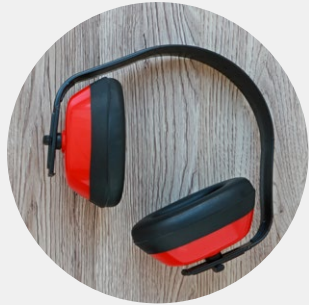
Treatments

If the tinnitus is caused by a medical condition or is a side effect to medication, treating that condition may help to stop the tinnitus. If the cause is not known or cannot be treated, your GP may refer you onto a service to help you manage the condition, such as:

- **Tinnitus counselling** - Provides more information about the condition and allows you to explore methods of coping.
- **Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)** - Helps to change your beliefs about tinnitus, helping you to manage the condition.
- **Tinnitus retraining therapy** - A type of sound therapy that helps retrain your brain to block out or make the tinnitus sounds less noticeable.

Protecting your hearing

Sometimes the cause of tinnitus is not clear, but there are steps you can take to help protect your ears and hearing. Illness and earwax aren't the only things you need to think about in terms of proper ear care. It's important to guard against noise.



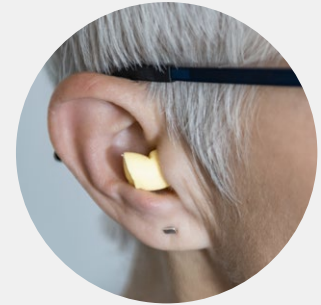
Hearing Protection

At home or at work, wear hearing protection during exposure to loud levels of noise. This includes when you're mowing the lawn or using power tools. The law requires you to use hearing protection if you work in a noisy environment.



Volume

When listening to music, avoid high volume levels. Generally, a noise is probably loud enough to damage your hearing if you have to raise your voice to talk to other people, it hurts your ears, or you have ringing in your ears or muffled hearing afterwards.



Earplugs

Protect your hearing during loud events and activities such as concerts, nightclubs and loud motor sporting events by wearing earplugs. You can buy re-usable musicians' earplugs that reduce the volume of music but do not muffle it.