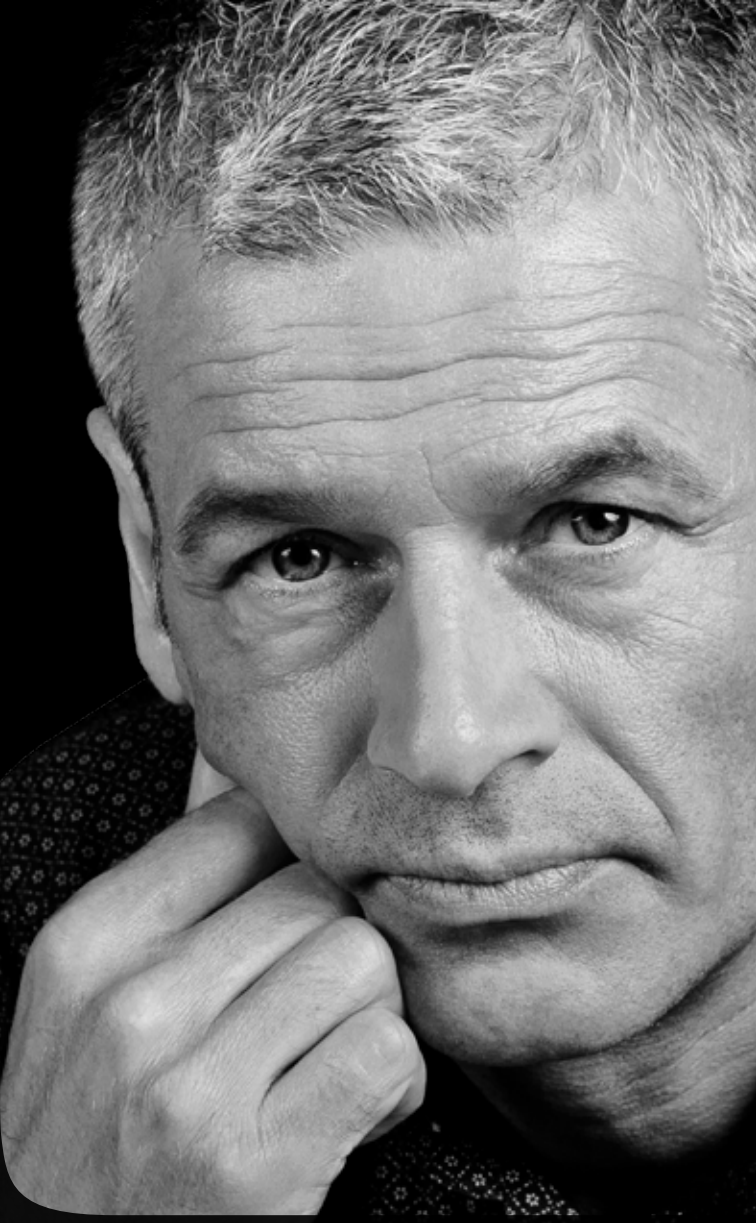


THE **MANY FACES** OF **TINNITUS**

WIDEX®
HIGH DEFINITION HEARING

There are an estimated 50 million people affected by tinnitus in the United States.

The primary symptom of tinnitus is ringing or buzzing in the ears. Hearing loss may also be an associated condition

WHAT IS TINNITUS?

of tinnitus. In 90 percent of the members in the American Tinnitus Association who are affected by tinnitus, hearing loss was also reported.*

*AMERICAN TINNITUS ASSOCIATION

WHAT CAN **CAUSE TINNITUS**?

Tinnitus can be triggered by a variety of causes, but is commonly linked to exposure to loud sounds, which can damage the delicate sensory cells of the inner ear. This condition has also been associated with ear infections, aging, stress, excessive earwax, high blood pressure, and sensory nerve disorders. Activities such as smoking; drinking alcohol or caffeine, and taking excessive amounts of aspirin or antibiotics may exacerbate tinnitus.

Activities that may exacerbate tinnitus.

HOW CAN I **MANAGE TINNITUS**?

If you suspect that you may be one of the many faces of tinnitus, your first step is to undergo a professional evaluation. Counseling with an experienced hearing healthcare professional trained in managing tinnitus, improves your chances of success in regaining your quality of life. The effects of tinnitus can often be minimized by a combination of counseling and sound stimulation.

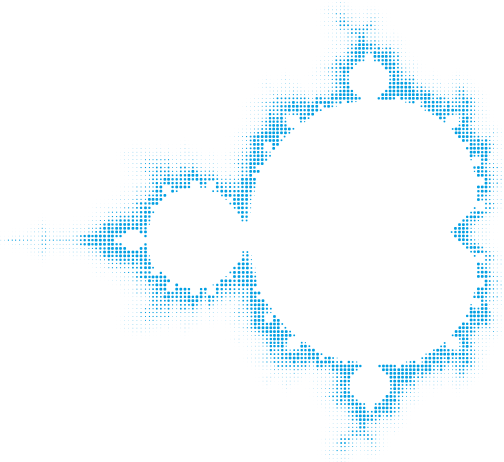
How does sound help?
Amplified sound from hearing aids, environmental influences, music, or sound from noise generators can help to minimize the contrast between the buzzing or ringing of tinnitus and the surrounding sound environment.

A highly original hearing aid feature that has been shown in a clinical study to be a promising tool for tinnitus relief is known as Zen.

WHAT IS **ZEN**?

The patented Zen Program is available exclusively in Widex hearing aids.

The Zen tones are inspired by the relaxing effect of certain types of music. Zen plays random, chime-like tones that can be used for relaxation and for making tinnitus less noticeable. With stress named as one of the most common factors involved with tinnitus, relaxation and stress reduction are vital elements in effective tinnitus management.



For some people with tinnitus, counseling and the use of hearing aids with Zen may be the key to reclaiming clear, uninterrupted hearing. The effect of using Zen is immediate but for most it will take some time. Your hearing care professional will help you set realistic goals and can adjust the Zen program if needed.

Zen is for daily use. You can use it to avoid complete silence and so reducing your focus on the tinnitus. It can also be used for meditation and relaxation purposes.

Widex researchers, designers, audiologists, and engineers have been committed to helping the many faces of tinnitus, all of whom have been affected by frequent or persistent hearing disruptions. We are proud of our unique approach, which provides millions of people a promising option for tinnitus management.

EXERCISES AND TIPS

RELAXATION EXERCISE (1)

Stress can make it harder to cope successfully with tinnitus and can often cause a tightening of muscles. Doing some exercises can help you to relax and thereby reduce stress.

It is recommended that you spend 15 minutes each day doing these relaxation exercises.

Here are some tips to remember when carrying out these relaxation exercises:

- Sit in a comfortable chair in a quiet place with no distractions
- Do the exercises while listening to the Zen tones but if you are too distracted, turn them off
- Take off your shoes and wear loose, comfortable clothing
- Don't worry if you fall asleep
- After finishing the exercises, close your eyes, relax for a few minutes, breathe deeply and rise up slowly.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

An example of progressive muscle relaxation is to focus on the muscles in your right foot. Then inhale and simply tighten the muscles as hard as you can for about eight seconds. Try to tense only the muscles that you are concentrating on. Feel them tense. Then release them by sud-

denly letting go. Let the tightness and pain flow out of the muscles while you slowly exhale.

The idea is to progress systematically, starting with your head and progressing all the way down to your feet. Here is 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 rise up.

RELAXATION EXERCISES (2)

Doing some exercises can help you to relax and thereby reduce stress. The following exercises 'Deep Breathing' and 'Guided imagery' take only five to ten minutes.

Deep breathing

Follow the tips above and add deep, rhythmic breathing. Specifically, you should complete the following cycle 20 times:

- 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
- Repeat the cycle 20 times

The entire exercise takes approximately five to seven minutes.

Guided imagery
After achieving a state of relaxation via deep breathing, keep your eyes closed and continue the deep breathing while imagining yourself in the most relaxing environment possible (perhaps lying on the beach, floating in the water, or floating on a cloud).

Try to imagine, with all your senses, the feel of the air on your skin, the smell of the fresh ocean or forest, or the taste of your favorite beverage and either listen to the Zen tones, or make up your own pleasant and relaxing imagery sound, like ocean waves, a babbling brook, or the crackling of a warm fire.

When finished, count backwards from 20 and slowly rise up.

The ‘Guided imagery’ exercise can also be beneficial after progressive muscle relaxation.

TIPS FOR **MANAGING SLEEP PROBLEMS**

One of the most common problems among people with tinnitus is difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep. It is important to address these issues, as they will have an effect on your ability to cope with your tinnitus.

Managing sleep problems

Before dealing with your sleep problems, you should keep in mind that adults need an average of eight hours of sleep and that sleep requirements sometimes change as you get older. Here is a list of suggestions to help you manage any sleep problems:

- Maintain a standard bedtime and set your alarm for the same time each 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 a favorite TV program, or participating in a hobby activity.
- Avoid food and drinks that contain caffeine. Caffeine is present not just in coffee but in soft drinks, tea, hot chocolate 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 of a nap.

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. This reduces the time you are awake in bed.

THE **BENEFITS** OF **ZEN**

Sound stimulation plays a vital role in managing the effects of tinnitus. Typical sounds used in tinnitus management can be amplified sounds from hearing aids, environmental sounds and music or noise from noise generators. Using sound in this way can help minimize the contrast between the tinnitus and the surrounding sound environment to provide relief from annoying sounds. It also makes sure the brain receives as much sound input as possible making it less likely to overreact because of too little sound.

Sound also helps you relax. As stress is one of the most common factors involved with tinnitus, relaxation and stress reduction are vital elements in effective tinnitus management.

Your hearing aids have a Zen program that helps manage the effects of tinnitus. Zen is individualized according to your hearing loss and takes background noise into consideration when playing.

By choosing Widex hearing aids, you are choosing products from a company that has been WindMade certified. WindMade is the first global consumer label identifying companies that use wind power.

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