



## MANAGING MY TINNITUS

**WIDEX**



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AROUND  
740 MILLION PEOPLE  
WORLDWIDE SUFFER  
FROM TINNITUS

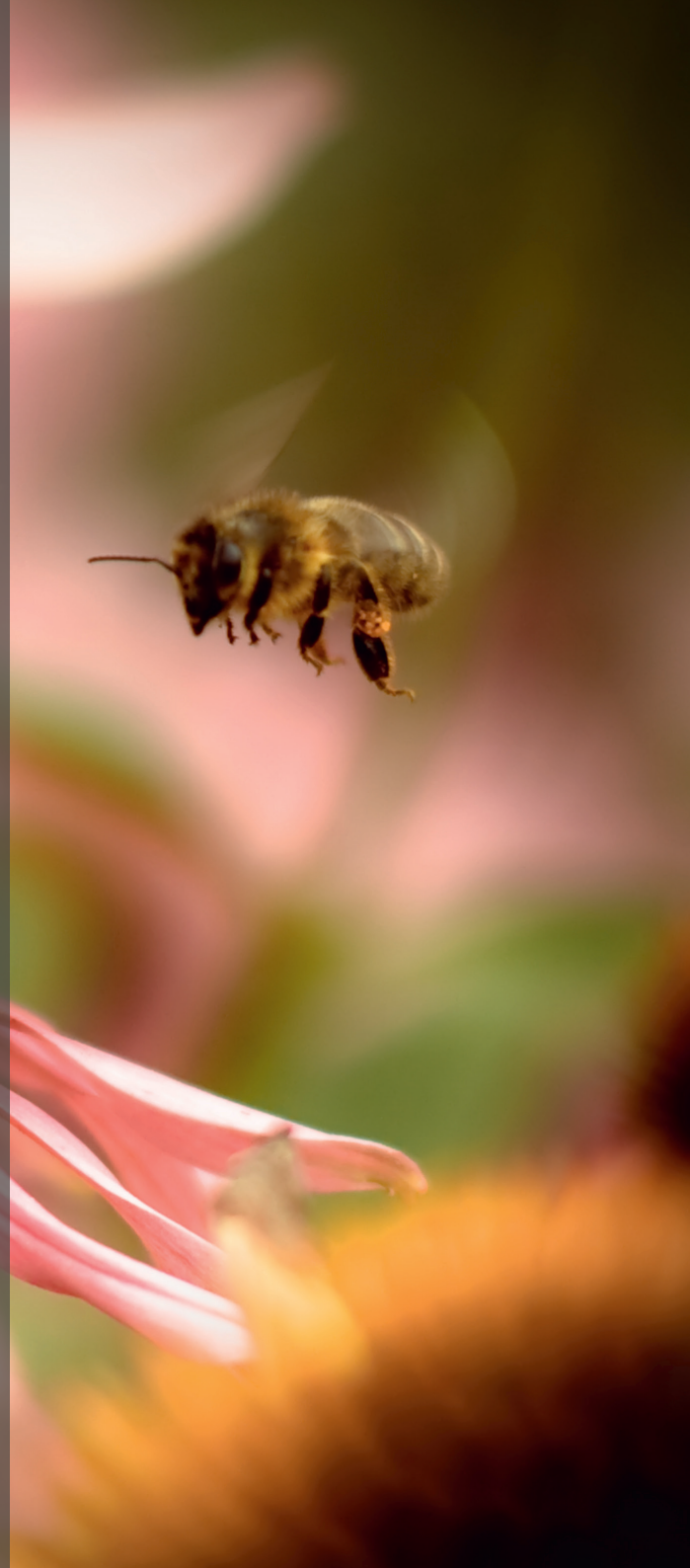




# WHAT IS TINNITUS?

Tinnitus is the perception of sounds or noise within the ears with no external sound source.

These sounds are often described as ringing, humming or buzzing noises and they can be constant or come and go.



# WHAT CAUSES 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, ageing, stress, excessive ear wax, 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.







## HOW CAN I MANAGE MY TINNITUS?

If you are affected by tinnitus, your first step is to undergo a professional evaluation. Counseling with an experienced hearing health care 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.



# WHAT ARE ZEN AND SOUNDRELAX?

**The patented Zen/SoundRelax 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, known as fractals, that can be used for relaxation and for making tinnitus less noticeable. Widex SoundRelax™ tones are also fractal tones, but inspired by nature sounds.


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/SoundRelax may be the key to reclaiming your life. The effect of using Zen/SoundRelax can be immediate but for most it will take some time. Your hearing care professional will help you set realistic goals and can adjust the Zen/SoundRelax program if needed.

The Zen/SoundRelax program 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 people suffering from 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 with a promising option for tinnitus management.

Depiction of a fractal tone



# EXERCISES AND TIPS

There is a strong link between stress and tinnitus, creating a vicious cycle: tinnitus causes stress and stress causes tinnitus. If we learn to cope with stress in our lives, that cycle can be broken and the impact that the tinnitus has on us can be reduced. One of the ways in which we can learn to cope with stress is by practicing daily relaxation exercises.

We have a few exercise recommendations, which you should spend about 15 minutes on each day. Before starting the exercises, make sure that:

- You're sitting in a comfortable chair (or on an exercise mat, if you're more comfortable there),
- The environment is quiet and that you won't be distracted,
- You're wearing loose, comfortable clothing,
- If you want to listen to the Widex Zen or SoundRelax tones, that you've got your Widex hearing aids on or have the Widex Zen - Tinnitus Management App handy.\*



# BEFORE WE JUMP TO THE EXERCISES

## What are the benefits of sound stimulation and Widex Zen/SoundRelax?

It's been proven that sound stimulation plays a vital role in managing the effects of tinnitus. One can use a range of sounds, but most people use amplified sounds from hearing aids, environmental sounds, and music or noise from noise generators. Using sound in this way minimizes the contrast between the tinnitus and the surrounding sound environment, which makes it less annoying and noticeable for you.

Widex offers sound stimulation in the form of Widex Zen/SoundRelax\* tones available in Widex hearing aids and the Widex Zen Tinnitus Management App. For those using Widex hearing aids, the Zen program is individualized for your unique hearing loss and needs. Users have rated this technology highly, with the majority stating that they felt that Widex Zen and SoundRelax had improved their tinnitus and their quality of life.

Get tools for relief from your tinnitus with the Widex Zen - Tinnitus Management App. Free download from App Store and Google Play.



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# PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Time required: 5 minutes

Progressive muscle relaxation is a process in which you tense your muscles and then focusing on consciously relaxing them again, all while breathing deeply. The purpose of progressive muscle relaxation is to help you learn what it feels like when your muscles are tensed, so that you can relax them when you feel the stress tension coming on in the future.

- 1 Starting from your head down, focus on a particular group of muscles.
- 2 Take a deep breath over a span of eight seconds and tighten these muscles while you do this. For example, pull your face into a grimace to tighten your facial muscles.
- 3 Release the muscles suddenly, while slowly breathing out. Feel how the tightness and pain flow out of the muscles while you do this.
- 4 Repeat the above steps in this order: neck, shoulders, chest, stomach, right arm and hand, left arm and hand, buttocks, right leg and foot, and left leg and foot.
- 5 After you've completed all of the muscle groups, relax for 10 - 15 seconds and then repeat the whole exercise. It shouldn't take more than five minutes to complete the whole exercise.
- 6 When you've finished the whole exercise, count to 20 and get up slowly.



# DEEP BREATHING

Time required: 5 - 7 minutes

Practicing deep breathing has a multitude of benefits, including decreasing stress, lowering blood pressure, and improving the well-being of those with anxiety and depression. Deep breathing acts as a signal to your brain to relax, which could in turn reduce how bothersome your tinnitus is to you (as we know that being stressed and tense worsens tinnitus).

- 1 Exhale completely through your mouth.
- 2 Inhale through your nose for four seconds – make sure that you’re using a “longer” count here, for example counting: ‘One-thousand-one, one-thousand-two...’
- 3 Hold your breath for four seconds.
- 4 Exhale through your mouth for six to eight seconds.
- 5 Repeat this cycle 20 times.

# GUIDED IMAGERY

Time required: 5 - 7 minutes

It is best to do this exercise directly after you have finished the deep breathing exercise. Guided imagery is an exercise in which you imagine yourself in a very relaxing environment and has also been shown to promote relaxation, decrease stress, and lower blood pressure.

- 1 Keep your eyes closed after finishing your deep breathing exercise. If you can, continue with deep breathing while completing the Guided Imagery exercise.
- 2 Imagine that you are in the most relaxing environment – whatever that means for you, for example lying on the beach, floating in water, or floating on a cloud.
- 3 Try to imagine with all of your senses what it feels like to be in this environment – imagine the smell, the sound, the feel on your skin, the taste (if applicable).
- 4 You can play the Zen tones, the SoundRelax tones or your own relaxing imagery sound (e.g. fire crackling, ocean waves, babbling brook) while doing this exercise.
- 5 When you’re finished, count to 20 and then slowly get up.

# TIPS: IMPROVING YOUR SLEEP



One of the most common side effects of tinnitus is having difficulty falling or staying asleep. Research has shown the importance of good sleep – ideally an average of eight hours per night for adults. Without sufficient sleep, we have a lack of energy, memory and concentration difficulties, and are at risk for various other health conditions. It's important to address the sleep difficulties because these will have an effect on your ability to cope with your tinnitus. Here are some suggestions to help you manage any sleep problems:

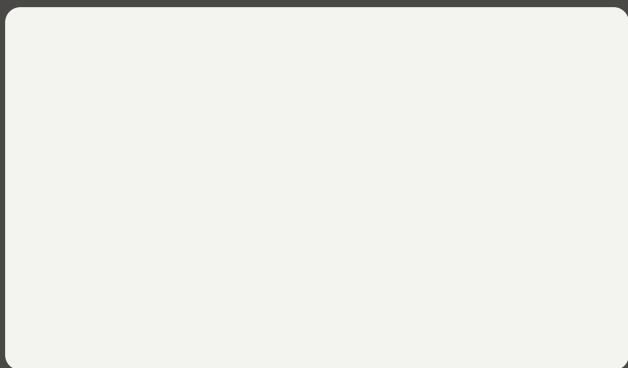
- Make sure that you have a standard bedtime – if you find this difficult, set an alarm for 15 – 20 minutes before bedtime, so that you're reminded to start your bedtime routine.
- On that point – set a bedtime routine for yourself, for example taking a warm bath or listening to Zen/SoundRelax tones before bed.
- Exercise or go for a walk for at least 10 minutes a day – but don't do this right before your bedtime.
- Make sure that your bedroom is dark enough to sleep and that the temperature is comfortable for you.
- Sleep on your back or side – try to avoid sleeping on your stomach.

- Avoid watching TV, reading or eating before going to bed.
- When you do climb into bed, take a deep breath and relax. Feel your muscle loosen up and focus on pleasant thoughts.
- You might find using a fan or a white noise machine to 'mask' your tinnitus useful.
- Avoid foods and drinks that contain caffeine – remember that caffeine is not just in coffee, but also soft drinks, tea, and hot chocolate, to name a few.
- If you find yourself feeling very tired during the afternoon, try to avoid the temptation to take an afternoon nap, because this will impact how tired you feel later on when trying to fall asleep.
- If you still feel that you can't fall asleep, rather get up and do a quiet activity until you feel sleepy and relaxed again. Lying awake in bed will probably make you feel a bit tense, because you are trying so hard to fall asleep.

\*Widex SoundRelax tones are only available via Widex hearing aids. If listening to tones is too distracting for you during the relaxation exercises, you can switch them off.

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SOUND LIKE NO OTHER



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