



# 8

## TIPS For Managing Tinnitus at Home

Strategies like progressive relaxation exercises, sleep hygiene, and mindfulness techniques will be reviewed to help you stay well at home!

### 1



#### Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Step 1: Focus on the muscles in a certain area (i.e. right hand).  
Step 2: Inhale and tighten the muscles as hard as you can for about 8 seconds.  
Step 3: Then release them by letting go. Let the tightness flow out of the muscles while you slowly exhale.  
The idea is to progress systematically starting from your head and progressing to your feet. Relax 10-15 seconds and repeat. This exercise should take 5 minutes.



### 2



#### Deep Breathing

Follow the tips above but now add deep, rhythmic breathing. Complete the following cycle about 20 times: exhale completely through your mouth, inhale through your nose for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 4 seconds, exhale through your mouth for 6-8 seconds. This exercise should take 5-7 minutes.

When doing these exercises:

- Sit in a comfortable chair in a quiet place
- You can put on white noise or background sounds if desired
- Remove your shoes and wear comfortable and loose clothing

### 3



#### Guided Imagery

After achieving a state of relaxation with Deep Breathing, keep your eyes closed and continue the Deep Breathing while Imagining yourself in the most relaxing environment possible. Try to imagine the feel of the air on your skin, the smells, or the taste of a favorite beverage. Listen to Zen tones or use your own relaxing sounds (i.e. ocean waves). When finished, count backwards from 20 and slowly rise.

**Stress can make it harder to cope with tinnitus. Try these relaxation exercises for 15 minutes every day to reduce your stress.**

### 4



#### Mindfulness

Keep sensations, thoughts, or feelings without judgement. Try not to ignore your tinnitus but rather just let it be without actively focusing on it.  
Resources: Try the phone apps Headspace or Calm to help guide you.



### 5



#### Managing Sleep Problems: The Don'ts

**Most adults need an average of 8 hours of sleep per night. However, individual sleep needs may vary or change with age.**

- Don't exercise before bed
- Don't watch TV, eat, or read in bed
- Don't sleep on your stomach
- Don't engage in exciting activities or hobbies before bed
- Don't consume caffeine near bedtime
- Don't nap in the late afternoon/early evening

### 6



#### Managing Sleep Problems: The Dos

- Do maintain a standard bedtime and wake up time
- Do keep your bedroom dark and at a comfortable temperature
- Do have a relaxing bedtime routine
- Do try to sleep on your back or side
- Do take a deep breath and relax your muscles/thoughts
- Do use a fan or white noise machine



### 7



#### Exercise

Regular exercise can be effective for reducing your stress, which can then reduce your tinnitus perception. Try doing some type of exercise 4 to 5 days per week for 15 to 20 minutes. It does not have to be strenuous.



### 8



#### Sound

Try keeping some kind of background noise on throughout the day. You could use a fan, a noise machine, the radio, or your favorite music. Avoid silence when possible.

**Remember: The goal is not to eliminate your tinnitus. The goal is to make it tolerable and less noticeable.**



#### Additional Resources

- Tinnitus-Directed Apps/Websites
- ReSound Tinnitus Relief
  - Starkey Relax
  - Widex Zen
  - Tinnitus Therapy Lite

- Meditation-Directed Apps/Websites
- Stop, Breathe & Think
  - Headspace
  - Calm
  - Breathe

- Noise Machine Apps/Websites
- myNoise
  - Relax Melodies
  - Nature Sounds Relax & Sleep



\* All apps are free to download on iPhone or Android  
Disclaimer: Apps are not endorsed by Weill Cornell Medicine