

**Adjust your diet and life style:** Avoid elements which aggravate your tinnitus, e.g. caffeine, alcohol

**Tinnitus Retraining Therapy:** Physiological counseling to reduce the irrational fears associated with severe tinnitus. Uses a low level of background noise to speed up the habituation process.

**Relaxation Therapy:** Self relaxation techniques may reduce the stress and symptoms of tinnitus.

**Giving up chasing cures:** Chasing cures encourages you to focus on your tinnitus which is counter-productive. At a certain point in time, you have to recognize the reality - Tinnitus is incurable. It is the first step towards normal habituation.

Aggravating factors	Improving factors
Smoking, Coffee →	Healthy Lifestyle
High salt diet →	Healthy food
High work pressure / stress →	Reduce stress
Insomnia →	Sufficient sleep
Loud Noises →	Hearing protection

## Psychological Attachment

Johathan Hazell, a UK ENT surgeon, links tinnitus to human an evolutionary ability which allows us to detect sounds from predators in the wild. Those sounds are recognized and associated as dangerous, fearful and life-threatening things. Therefore, the more you listen to your tinnitus, the louder it seems to become.

He found out most suffers who are not bothered by tinnitus, are those who are not panicked, recognize the tinnitus as part of their normal life with no negative feeling. In contrast, severe tinnitus sufferers are often distressed and worried. They fear tinnitus as a sign of serious health problem.

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## BRISBANE HEARING

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## Tinnitus Facts

**Ringling in the ears or noises in the head**

## What is Tinnitus?

Commonly known as ringing in the ears or noises in the head.

## How common is Tinnitus?

According to the Tinnitus Association of Victoria, approximately 17-20% of the population suffers from tinnitus to varying degrees.

## What causes Tinnitus?

- Ageing
- Exposure to loud noise
- Medical conditions, such as Meniere's Disease
- Middle ear problems
- Stress
- Ear injury or infection
- Some Drug or medicine



## How does Tinnitus start?

The exact etiology of Tinnitus is still unknown. Some experts describe it as a phantom sensation, like pain in a phantom limb. In a silent environment, a healthy ear transmits a constant stream of nerve impulses to the brainstem which is recognized as silence. If part of that transmission pathway is changed, either by damage in the cochlear, or pressure on the auditory nerve, etc, the normal pattern of nerve impulses will be interrupted. The brain will interpret that abnormality as sound. For example, high frequency inner ear nerve function gradually deteriorates with age, sufferers often describe their tinnitus as a high pitch ringing because the brain is no longer receiving the normal pattern of high frequency nerve impulses.

## Tinnitus Myths

Some tinnitus sufferers have no hearing loss. Not everyone with hearing loss has tinnitus. Most people who do have it, are not greatly bothered by it. Only 1% of sufferers find it severely affects their quality of life.

*17-20% of the population has tinnitus, but most are not bothered by it.*

## What should I do?

It is important to see your doctor or ENT specialist to rule out any underlying medical condition which can be treated.

You may need to have a comprehensive hearing test to assess your current hearing status.

The good news is that most sufferers can cope with their tinnitus very well over time by natural habituation of sound sensation in the brain.

For severe Tinnitus sufferers, unfortunately there is no single universally effective treatment:

**Tinnitus masker:** Provide temporary relief. However, it appears not to have a long term effect on tinnitus.

Enrich the sounds in your listening environment, e.g. install water features, play soft music, living by a beach!

**Sleeping pillow speaker:** Play soft music under your pillow without affecting your partner.

**Hearing Protection:** Prevents further hearing damage and aggravation of existing tinnitus.

**Hearing aid fitting:** By improving the audibility of sounds, tinnitus sound may reduce. Hearing aid can treat your hearing loss too

### Famous tinnitus sufferers:

Ludwig Van Beethoven • Phil Collins  
Michael Church • Barbra Streisand