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Am I hearing things (you don't) ????



About 5 years ago I started to notice a ringing in my ears. This is not a debilitating condition and I have learned to tune it out. More disturbing however is an inability to tolerate high frequency "Noise". An example would be the sound of plates clanging against each other as you remove them from the dishwasher. This type of sound feels somewhat painful. At the RMAF last month after day one I found I could no longer listen to anything and enjoy it as my ears felt fatigued. (stayed too long at Raidho). I had a pair of ear plugs but failed to employ them at all times. Normally I listen at an average of 70 db. per my free phone app readings.

I seem to notice during quiet moments a very low frequency off and on rumble sound. I thought it might be a piece of equipment in the home so I shut everything down, walked outside around all sides of the home thinking it might be emanating from a neighbor. No go. Its in my head.

At age 60+ I have probably been subjected to my share of excessive noise but have never been an artillery man or Navy Gunner for example.

Anyone else have similar experiences?

F

firstnot

11-02-2018 9:50am

Report this



kedoades 247 posts

11-02-2018 11:40am

I think you are talking about tinnitus, which is a ringing in your ears. I have these symptoms your are describing also. Many loud concerts and playing my music too loud for to many years has caused it I am sure.



elizabeth 7,169 posts

11-02-2018 2:03pm

The problem you are mentioning is called "Hyperacusis".It is a heightened sense of sounds at particular frequencies.Typically associated with some hearing loss.Like the regular level of that frequency seems fine. but a small increase in the level seems to the sufferer to be much louder, and may even be painful.

This is a medical condition. I doubt anyone here is qualified to offer treatments.



prof 1,959 posts

11-02-2018 3:08pm

@firstnot

Yes, I share your experience.

It's called "hyperacusis." A collapsed tolerance of sound, where sounds not normally perceived as "loud" by other people are perceived as loud by you. And usually this tends to occur in certain frequency ranges, typically upper frequencies, in just the range of clanging dishes as you describe. (Clanging dishes are a classic problem area for people with hyperacusis).

That is almost certainly the condition you are describing. Though you would be best advised to go to an ENT to be checked out to make sure it's not being caused by something that needs to be taken care of.

But if your experience is like many with this rare condition, you will be told you have hyperacusis by the ENT. Unfortunately that's often where ENT's stop, saying "sorry you have

it, you are on your own."

Fortunately there are people who know more about it. A good audiologists can tell you more and suggest strategies, though I'd say it's even better to seek out audiologists trained specifically in treating tinnitus and hyperacusis.

The reason I am familiar with all this is that I have had loud tinnitus for decades, with bouts of hyperacusis. Hyperacusis first hit me around 2001 when I was doing sound effects for a fantasy TV show, creating the sound of a giant lizard hissing. I started to notice the hissing sounds I was working with were really irritating my ears. I didn't think much of it until I got home and then it seemed everything, especially in the upper frequencies, seemed loud and irritating. Literally turning the pages of a book, the sound of my fingers rubbing the paper, "stuck out" to my ears in an annoying way. Same with dishes, cutlery, even the sibilance in people's voices. Even watching TV was hard.

Suffice to say...it was pretty depressing. And the natural thing to do was research, which led to on-line tinnitus/hyperacusis groups, where I read about the problems and potential therapies.

Even back then there was a potential therapy for both tinnitus and hyperacusis. For tinnitus it was called "Tinnitus Retraining Therapy" or "TRT." It was based on the theory that ringing came from the brain's reaction to ringing caused by hearing damage (even a tiny bit of damage) and that the noise was linked to the brain's more primitive "fight or flight" and emotional responses, which are heightened and disturbed by the noise. Which is why tinnitus ringing is actually seen as a threat to the mind, even though the same volume of noise in the environment is not seen as a threat.

So the brain has to be "re-programmed" to not see tinnitus as a threat.

The therapy involves both cognitive therapy (counseling sessions to help ways of not reacting to tinnitus) and sound therapy. In the sound therapy, often little noise generators, like hearing aids, pump very quiet white noise in to the ear just below the level of the person's tinnitus tone. What this does is give the brain a constant environmental stimulus right near the tone of the tinnitus (though not totally masking the tinnitus).

Over time, due to the plasticity of our brain, it "re-wires" to not see the tone as a threat including your tinnitus. After the therapy, the tinnitus is not "cured" in the sense the ringing has been removed. But rather you are habituated and no longer notice it (which, in practice, amounts to the ringing not really being there - you don't perceive it when you don't notice it).

A similar therapy is used for hyperacusis.

In that case, again it's a combination of counseling and sound therapy.

In hyperacusis, the theory says, your hearing FEELS damaged, but it is not. This is shown by the fact that when you test most people with hyperacusis their hearing is fine...if not even better than most people's hearing.

Rather, in hyperacusis, the theory goes that the brain has been stimulated at some point - often by exposure to noise (short and loud, or longer exposure to loud noise) to "turn up the volume." Usually this happens around the area of hearing decline or damage in a person. So if you have an audiology test and it shows a dip in your hearing, usually from noise exposure, you are most likely to be sensitive to sounds in that frequency range. The brain has "turned up" its volume to try to hear in that range, making the affected frequencies sound extra loud, uncomfortable, even distorted or painful. And since our hearing is usually damaged a bit in the upper frequencies, that's usually the sensitivity in the hyperacusis sufferer.

In the therapy for hyperacusis, you do Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (counseling) to help understand your hearing is not in fact being damaged by sound, and to lower reaction to it. And you can additionally do sound therapy with the noise generators. They pump a quiet, pleasing white noise (actually personalized to the comfort of the individual's hyperacusis), which creates a constant stimulus. The noise is increased in volume over time, allowing the person to habituate and "re-wire" the unconscious part of the brain responsible for seeing noise as a threat.

I never did the TRT because I just habituated to my Tinnitus myself over time. It can sound really loud if I give it my attention, but I've been able to sleep fine over the years. Also, my hearing has always tested as quite good.

I also didn't choose to do the therapy for hyperacusis because for one thing it seemed more of an investment in time or money than I wanted to make (it can take up to 2 years of therapy). And fortunately I habituated over time and the hyperacusis essentially went away for most of the last 17 years, only making an occasional appearance but not lasting very long.

However, recently due to a very heavy, unforeseen exposure to loud noise, my hyperacusis showed up again, as bad as when I first got it.

This time I decided to not wait. I've found a local audiologists who specializes in the hyperacusis/tinnitus therapy and have just begun the therapy (wearing the noise generators as I type this).

The audiologist certainly seems confident we'll get good results, and in fact after only about a week in my hearing already seems to feel a bit better. So I'm feeling optimistic. (Which is also buoyed by the fact hyperacusis went away the first time).

So there you go: what I can tell you from my own experience.

Of course you shouldn't let anyone diagnose you over the internet and as I say, you should see at least an audiologist with your problem, if not an ENT first. And also, hyperacusis varies - you can get it and it just goes away after a week, or month or two. Or it can stick around a long time (without treatment). No way to know at this point whether yours (if you have it) will just pass or not I guess.

If I could leave you with any takeaway it would be this:

IF you have hyperacusis....

Be careful about doing too much research, of the type that sucks you in to the various discussion boards devoted to tinnitus and hyperacusis. The reasons are various. For one thing, tinnitus and hyperacusis are very much an "attention" phenomenon. The more attention you give it, the more you will be aware of and suffer from it. The other is that discussion boards tend to collect people who trade grievances with one another. In other words, they tend to self-select for those who still have the condition and are struggling with it; you don't see those who have habituated or put it behind them, because they tend to be just getting on with life, not inhabiting those discussion boards. So you can get a very depressing, sometimes "hopeless" sensation reading people just complaining about their hearing condition.

Finally, know that it is common for hyperacusis to get better over time. And if it doesn't, there are therapies available that supposedly work. (The audiologist I'm working with has been treating people for many years, with apparently a very high success rate).

Sorry for the long post, but I thought you could possibly use it at this point.

Hang in there!



slaw 6,621 posts

11-02-2018 3:16pm

I've had the same thing for years. At first, it was a very depressing issue for me as listening to music brings me so much joy. To this day I still have it, just to a lesser degree.

Thankfully, for me, I had a large wax build up that was exasperating the issue. I now wash my ears out every two months.

I feel for you brother. Hang in there.



uberwaltz 6,261 posts

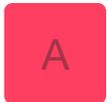
11-02-2018 3:29pm

@prof

Excellent, very helpful and informative post!

Agreed the OP should be seeing a specialist asap but at least he can now walk away with the knowledge that it is NOT the end of his world.

Thank you sir!



andolink 11 posts

11-02-2018 4:58pm

I'm 60 yrs. old and have had tinnitus since I was in my mid 20's. Mine sounds like a continuous sssssssssssssssssss sound or if your familiar with the sound of sand blasting that's what I hear. I also from time to time hear a specific tone that isn't really there that I've identified as 260 Hz.

My tinnitus was the result of a 24 hour viral infection.

A particularly interesting aspect of my condition is that it's volume cycles up and down over roughly a 3 day period from extremely intrusive to mildly annoying.



prof 1,959 posts

11-02-2018 5:29pm

Interesting, andolink.

My tinnitus can be astonishingly loud. Sometimes if I'm in silence, like lying in bed, it can give me the impression I'm at a Van Halen concert where feedback is just being pumped out at "11."

Which makes it all the more remarkable to me that I can actually ignore it and sleep and do other things. And when I'm not paying attention to it...it isn't there. For instance, even if I walk in to a silent room I won't hear it as I'm not trying to hear it. It really does show how much of an "attention" issue tinnitus is in terms of it's effects on many people.

Over the decades I've had tinnitus (since playing in a loud band in the late 80's) it has rarely, in of itself, impacted my listening to music or high end audio. Usually I just can't hear it when I'm listening to music. But sometimes it gets bad, what is called "reactive" tinnitus in which it reacts to loud sounds and gets subjectively louder. During those periods it can actually be audible riding "over" the music almost no matter how loud I play it. That's a real bummer when it happens, but fortunately also very rare. I just take it easy when it happens and it's gone in a few hours or the next day.

The noise generators I'm using right now aren't strictly to treat the tinnitus (that's a slightly different protocol, though using the noise therapy). Nonetheless, it still seems to have some effect on lowering my tinnitus. When I take the generators off to sleep everything sounds so quiet, including my Tinnitus, that for short periods it's almost like I don't have it at all.



mantaman25 posts

11-02-2018 6:20pm

At age 60 you have lost some of your hearing, i don't care what kind of job you had, its just the aging factor, we lost approx 1/60 every year after 35, Get a good hearing check from an ENT doc, he will be able to tell how much you lost and your current auditory range !!

Post removed Nov 02, 2018



vittles9 posts

11-02-2018 7:43pm

Microwave radiation exposure can also be a cause.



andolink11 posts

11-02-2018 7:49pm

Actually I had a hearing test a couple of years ago and was told my hearing is good for my age. Only the highest frequency they test for was beyond my ability to hear.

S

stevecham 3,340 posts

11-02-2018 8:26pm

At times I have a touch of this and it seems to center around the 5kHz band. What I've found works for me is to listen to music at very low levels, below the threshold where I hear the "resonances." After relaxing into the music, the resonance seems to diminish to where I no longer perceive it. This is not something I came up with; several well known rock musicians have revealed this practice in interviews (Pete Townshend is one). I think they were encouraged to use this method by audiologists/ENTs. Also, I limit my caffeine and sodium intake before listening. Both seem to exacerbate the problem if I'm not careful.

S

stevecham 3,340 posts

11-02-2018 9:30pm

One more thing: when I drive the interstate for over a half hour, continuously, I wear hearing protection (re-expandable foam inserts, 30 dB attenuators). I find that road noise is another aggravating source.

Post removed Nov 03, 2018

P

prof 1,959 posts

11-03-2018 9:56am

Geeze..who is making posts that have to be removed, in a thread on this subject???

E

elizabeth 7,169 posts

11-03-2018 10:02am

Sometimes folks remove their own post. It may be the person felt too exposed by what they wrote. Sometimes, even months later, hearing loss mentioned is thrown into the person face in other audio 'discussions'. I have seen it too often. Anyone can delete their own post in the time it can be modified.

D

djones51 666 posts

11-03-2018 10:18am

I removed my own post. I need to use the preview before posting it was a little to personal. I'm having a hard time dealing with this issue. Sorry.

E

elizabeth 7,169 posts

11-03-2018 10:38am

It is had for any audiophile to come to terms with any sort of hearing problem. Partly a guy thing of never letting down your guard, (If you do, macho type guys will 'punish you for being 'weak'.) plus here it is wide open public display. Not just a few friends. Facing the fact most of us are getting old. Some hearing loss is gonna happen.

P

prof 1,959 posts

11-03-2018 10:39am

Oh, I see.

Yes it's understandable to not want to feel one is exposing too much.

It does feel a bit odd to talk about "hearing health" issues on an audiophile board. Some people could possibly be d*cks and try to put a negative spin on that.

But these issues ARE a concern for people, and one would think especially audiophiles, and since the issues naturally crop up now and again, I think it's helpful to share what information we can.

In my case, if there is a silver lining to having had Tinnitus since the late 80's, it's that it got me protecting my ears early, and hence my audiogram is actually very good and hearing tone tests are excellent for my age - it's more like the hearing of someone 12 years younger (I'm 54).

My audiologist was going through very minute adjustments of the white noise for my treatment, through the earbuds. When he'd adjust I'd tell him "you just slightly increased the

sound around 4K."

He expressed amazement as he said he was adjusting by 1 or 2 dB increments, and no one had ever remarked on hearing the difference.

Fortunately I have good hearing and I do this for my living. I'm increasing various parts of the frequency range in a wide variety of sounds, by 1 to 3 dB all the time.

Now, I just want my hearing to get LESS sensitive :)

But as for hearing loss, as people have said, a large proportion of audiophiles are over 50 and definitely would have lost high frequency hearing, especially if you are more towards 60 and beyond. (My wife is 55 and did not live a life exposed to tons of loud sound, yet her hearing caps off somewhere around 10Kz or below). So many audiophiles can only brag so far about their hearing. But given much of what our brain cares about is actually below the frequency of age-related hearing loss, we can all still enjoy music and evaluate most aspects of high end gear.



geoffkait 15,705 posts

11-03-2018 11:03am

It's perhaps one of the biggest ironies, among many ironies in this oft bizarre hobby of audio, that those who claim to have no hearing issues or problems can't hear what they're listening to whilst those who do have issues such as hearing loss can hear plain as day and know the difference between this and that.



djones51 666 posts

11-03-2018 11:43am

I've only noticed the ringing the last couple of years as my hearing is getting worse. My wife has had it longer and is coping with it better. The ENT she saw who worked at the same University she does and also does research on this told her in simple terms, your brain expects sound and as you lose hearing it compensates by providing sound hence the ringing. My ENT says my hearing is only lousy at high frequency which is normal for my age 62. I also have dizzy spells and they have been testing for meniere's disease though I don't have classical symptoms it also could be a neurological problem. In other words it sucks getting old. Should know more when I go back in Jan. The OP mentioned artillery, my father was in

artillery during the Korean war and suffered hearing loss about 70% in one ear and small amount in the other, he had tinnitus most of his life and always talked about how certain noises , like the plates clanging, were actually painful. We always had heavy stoneware dishes as they didn't seem to clang in a way that bothered him.

 **prof**1,959 posts

11-03-2018 12:15pm

Trust geoffkait to show up and troll even a thread devoted to hearing health.

D'ya ever think of taking a break? Maybe try buying a puppy?

 **geoffkait**15,705 posts

11-03-2018 12:52pm

prof, you're firing on all four cylinders today! A little testy, are we? I thought we were buds. I hate to judge before all the facts are in but I suspect I know a little bit more about hearing than you do, professor. Is this another thread you supposedly own?

 **prof**1,959 posts

11-03-2018 1:59pm

geoffkait,

Yes I'm rather a bit sensitive about this issue. These are quite serious for some people (including me right now). Your remark, clearly one of your usual digs at people's hearing perception of the type you always throw up in the controversial tweaks threads, is the type of thing that makes people here feel less comfortable about discussing hearing issues that can affect us audiophiles.

It's just a d*ck move on your part to import that crap in to a thread like this.

If you want to add some of your authoritative content "about hearing" that you think *might

actually help someone* why don't you go ahead. Just...try!...not to be a d*ck about it by moving things to your usual hobby horse of taking the p*ss out of everyone.



geoffkait 15,705 posts

11-03-2018 2:12pm

prof, I wasn't taking a dig at anyone, as you put it. It was simply an observation. Nothing to get all worked up about. If you're so sensitive about this issue maybe you should sit this one out. Have a nice day.



roxy54 2,726 posts

11-03-2018 2:15pm

I have had tinnitus for about 8 years as a result of a medication I was taking. It really bothered me at first, especially as a music lover. I didn't want it to intrude on my listening. I found over a period of a couple months that my mind adapted to it, and I don't notice it at all while listening. I can easily hear it in a silent room though, and not surprisingly, when I am thinking about it, like now!



prof 1,959 posts

11-04-2018 12:55pm

I wonder where firstnot disappeared to?



elizabeth 7,169 posts

11-07-2018 8:35am

firstnot just posted a reply to some other forum discussion 9 hours ago. today is November 7, 2018) Click on his moniker to see his posts etc... So clearly he has no interest in further posting here. But is around. Maybe he just needed to read some others experience?



prof 1,959 posts

11-07-2018 4:03pm

I just find it strange that someone starts a thread asking for people's experience with a concerning health problem he is having, he receives detailed and hopefully helpful replies....which includes people who have the same issue....and he doesn't even show up again in the thread to acknowledge any of this. Almost as if it wasn't important in the first place.

I don't get it.

Ah well, perhaps this thread has been of some interest or help to someone else.



djones51 666 posts

11-07-2018 5:19pm

I found out yesterday that part of my problem with tinnitus could be related to TMJ. My dentist said, What are you doing running a marathon in your sleep? Going to see a specialist in a few weeks, she said there are some things they can do to help. I told my ENT the ringing always seemed worse in morning so he suggested let my dentist know and have them check. Might be something others with this problem can have checked.



ron17 205 posts

11-08-2018 3:35pm

@prof

Thank you so much for your posts regarding tinnitus/hyperacusis. It took me almost a decade to learn what you posted on 11/2/18. I ended up with tinnitus and hyperacusis in one ear after years of playing in rock bands. It got so bad I quit playing and listening to music for over 10 years. Around 5 years ago I decided to start listening to music again. I now listen daily but at very low levels. I saw an ENT doctor several months ago to see if there had been any advances or treatments for my condition. After a MRI and three office visits he recommended I try a therapy called Desyncra performed at the House Ear Institute. The therapy sounds like what you described and what you are currently involved in. Is it the same therapy you are using? It is expensive and I haven't found any user reviews stating results (positive or negative).

I do think your posts will be helpful to tinnitus and hyperacusis sufferers searching for



n80 1,662 posts

11-08-2018 4:28pm

As usual Geoff interjects meaningless snide remarks that are neither helpful, insightful, asked for or original. All pretty much to let us know that he knows more about this (and everything else) than anyone else. And yet.....still fails to make sense about half the time. And even with his superior knowledge (I will not say intellect) typically fails to help anyone in any meaningful way. And I know I shouldn't have said any of this because 1. He seems to have no insight. 2. Doesn't understand why most everyone thinks (knows) he is an @\$\$. 3. Even worse....like most trolls....he loves the attention and this was what he was after to begin with.

And prof....please don't encourage him to get a puppy. What do you have against puppies? ;-)

I am a physician and can tell you that prof is pretty much right on the mark. I have minor hearing loss (left worse than right), chronic 24/7/365 bilateral tinnitus and hyperacusis on occasion. At a recent concert there was a very high pitched sustained guitar cord that actually triggered a very brief dizziness and slight nausea even through ear plugs.

The truth is there is very very little that can be done about tinnitus. And the origin of tinnitus is still unknown but there are theories as listed above. There are some rare anatomical problems with the otic bones that can be corrected surgically but I've only seen that once in close to 30 years in medicine. That is why the ENT usually tells you to learn to live with it. And audiologist can test your hearing, many ENTs have them in house.

Most other remedies for tinnitus, as seen on the internet, as snake oil. I personally believe that TRT and CBT can help people deal with tinnitus, particularly those who get stressed out about it. Most of us who have it become aware at times when we are not 'hearing' it when in fact our brain just isn't paying attention to it. That tells me that 'brain training' can be useful and studies support this. I kind of do my own version of it and it helps sometimes.

I do recommend a visit to the ENT if you have new onset or worsening tinnitus but don't be upset when they tell you there isn't anything they can do. Its just a fact. Also see the audiologist is a good idea to find out exactly what your hearing loss is like.

There is an experimental treatment called repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation that showed some promise in a small study but that's been a few years ago and no new progress has been made that I'm aware of.



bdp24 5,403 posts

11-08-2018 5:23pm

And above all, even if you are already suffering with tinnitus and/or hearing loss, get ear molds made and buy some SPL attenuators from Westone or Etymotic, and wear them at all music (and perhaps movie) shows. They are little discs that attach to the outside end of the molds, available in 5dB SPL attenuation incremental values. The discs can be swapped out for different applications/environments. I didn't get mine until my late-30's, but better late than never.



prof 1,959 posts

11-08-2018 6:26pm

n80, (and others) thanks for your contribution!

As a Natural Born Skeptic, I've been wary of many of the claims for Tinnitus treatment (including ginkgo biloba and all sorts of other claims).

TRT doesn't have nearly the level of study and documentation I'd like to see for a treatment, but of all the available therapies, it at least has some in its favour. And there does seem at least an inherent plausibility to it, even from the experience of what it's like to have tinnitus. The idea of habituation via tuning out the attention to it.

Even a few nights ago my tinnitus was, I noticed when going to sleep, screamingly loud. Yet, as my mind drifted on to some other thoughts after a while I thought about my tinnitus again and...it was gone. It had just completely receded from perception once my mind was on something else. Even momentarily concentrating on it left it almost silent. But as I thought about the tinnitus, listened for it, it slowly drifted back again until it was loud. Then....drifted on to other thoughts and to sleep. It's really amazing how much of an "attention-based" phenomenon it is. And it also explains the variety of experience people can have with Tinnitus in terms of how much it affects their life or mood. Some can have relatively minor T and be driven nuts, other quite loud T and just shrug their shoulders and go on with life.

I habituated quite well to pretty loud Tinnitus myself, though go through bouts of mild alarm

when it seems triggered or louder.

I never used any masking sounds, just habituated and slept through it.

P

prof1,959 posts

11-08-2018 7:04pm

@ron17

I've read a little about Desyncra before. Though it hasn't had nearly the amount of discussion (that I've seen) as TRT-like treatments.

It seems based on a similar idea, though I've seen a bit of skepticism cast it's way by some TRT experts. (But then, there are often disagreements in these fields).

The main difference may be put down to the type of effort each demands. If I understand Desyncra, it would involve a more "dedicated" section of time to listen to the tailored noise. 4 to 6 hours. And the sound generators (look like tiny hearing aids) are physically attached to a device that looks like a smart phone.

In TRT, you just wear the little sound generators (essentially the same as you'd see in the Desyncra videos), which have been programmed with the tailored white noise. They are wireless and you just wear them the full day (or you can use them less...depends on comfort and advice in the personal treatment).

My main concern was my current hyperacusis, so I'm being treated for that first. I can tell you about my experience thus far if it helps.

First, my hyperacusis got, at points about a month ago, REALLY bad.

In fact, the day before my appointment to begin treatment, I woke up with my hearing completely screwed up: one ear sounding "dull" and the other like someone had eq'd all the upper frequencies way up, and painfully so. Though in the "dull" ear even just running water

sounded like shrill bursts of white noise. It was brutal! I've never had it quite that bad.

Fortunately it somewhat resolved during the day. But the thing that p#sses me off when the hyperacusis is bad is not just that sound (especially upper frequency) "hurts," but the sound, particularly in my left ear, actually sounds wrong - like a raw nerve where everything sounds brighter in that ear. That's when I know I'm having a bout of hyperacusis (though, as I've said, it's been quite rare since my first onset in 20010.

So when, after a recent really loud noise exposure, my left ear went in to that "super bright, harsh sound" mode, I knew the hyperacusis had been triggered.

So, first day of the treatment, mid day, I was fitted with the little noise generators. For treating hyperacusis, they discourage as much as possible using ear plugs, because that tends to make the brain "crank up" the volume even more to hear, and only exacerbates the noise sensitivity when you take out your earplugs. (Anyone can experience this if they just wear earplugs for a while - things will sound a bit brighter and louder for a bit, after taking them out). So the portion that goes in your ear is not meant to occlude (block) the ear like an earplug. It's perforated with large open areas to keep direct sound going in to the ear, while allowing the tailored white noise to be pumped in.

The audiologist, using a computer program, dialed in the right tone and loudness level for my comfort, and then the earbuds were programmed for me. They have volume controls if you want to turn it up, or down due to discomfort. The combination of the choice of molded frequency...something like a very dull, steady tone almost like a steady cold wind...combined with the open nature of the earbuds, means that external sound doesn't sound at all damped. Speech etc are all clear (I have the musician's earplugs that are supposed to produce flat noise reduction, and even those aren't nearly as "invisible" sonically as these noise generators in the ears).

One of the ways the noise helps is it provides something of a base-line buffer for external sounds. So a sudden sound, like a dish suddenly put down beside you, is not as dynamic and shocking to the ear. So right off the bat, my hearing felt more calmed during the first day I wore them.

I did worry that pumping continuous noise in to my ears could exacerbate my tinnitus, which unfortunately can be "reactive tinnitus" (reacts, gets louder, with noise). I'm happy to say that hasn't been the case. Even after the first day, in fact when I took the noise generators out, my tinnitus ringing actually seemed to be more quiet!

Part of the therapy is to also use a white noise generator they give you, to put at your bedside, set to a "calming" volume. Personally, I'm a very light sleeper and have always slept in

silence, so getting used to ANY new noise was a bit of a bummer. But it seems I've gotten used to it and sleep pretty well. The idea is to keep the subconscious part of the auditory system constantly stimulated, even when sleeping, to keep that "re-wiring" going on.

It is daunting that one is supposed to be prepared for up to two years of treatment! However, apparently many people report substantial improvement within a few months, so I'm hoping that's the case.

I can report that, after almost two weeks in to the treatment, my ears do indeed already feel better. It's incremental, but distinct. So for instance, when I take out the noise generators my hearing no longer sounds "wrong." That wonky "brightness eq" in my left ear seems to be gone and sound seems much more even, smooth and normal as it was before my hyperacusis started. That doesn't mean I'm out of the woods yet. Sounds in the certain upper frequency range of my hyperacusis still stick out and annoy me. So for instance, if I try to listen to some funky or latin music with a horn section, the horns still annoy my ears. But they don't sound "off" as in extra brightened, as they did a few weeks ago. So that's a very good thing!

I'm feeling optimistic. Will report back in this thread if I make good progress in a few months.



n80 1,662 posts

11-08-2018 7:32pm

Prof, I misspoke earlier in regard to TRT. I know very little about it but often suggest to my patients that they can try it since there isn't significant risk. Most have not found it worth the trouble.

In this discussion I had confused it with a form of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). Sorry if I caused confusion but I was primarily referring to CBT.

In regard to your observations on the mental aspect of tinnitus, well, I agree. Mine tends to be worse when I'm stressed, tired or sick. And I'm learning to mentally 'attenuate' the perception but it is far from foolproof.

It has never been an issue in regard to sleep. I run a small floor fan in the room and that

masks it fairly well.

In the past, when I would have those sudden bursts of very loud ringing I had the luxury of having one of my partners look at my ear drum and/or perform a quick tympanometry. Always normal.

I have not had formal audiometry but informally it is clear that it is mild presbycusis (old ears) and just high frequency and primarily just on the left.



geoffkait 15,705 posts

11-09-2018 5:24am

n80, no need for anger or frustration, but I will let you off the hook this time because you're a newbie. You just don't know where I'm coming from, that's all. My comments were in no way intended to be a dig or any such thing. It is *your* lack of knowledge on the subject of hearing and human perception of sound that is, perhaps ironically, the issue.

geoff kait
machina dynamica
advanced audio concepts



glupson 2,310 posts

11-09-2018 5:58am

stevecham,

Once upon a time, truck drivers were known to have left-sided problems that traced to the open window while driving. With more prevalent air conditioners, it is probably not much of a problem anymore.

I have never heard of anyone doing what you do until now. Except me inconsistently, but many times, that is. Over time, I formed the opinion that internal noise should be very high on the list when picking a car. Sadly, many cars are tuned to make them noisier to enhance some "sporty" feeling.



glupson 2,310 posts

11-09-2018 6:01am

geoffkait,

"You just don't know where I'm coming from, that's all."

Would you be so kind and tell us where you are coming from? We all have places we would rather not go so being prepared would be nice. We do not want same thing to happen to us.

Post removed Nov 09, 2018



ron17 205 posts

11-10-2018 11:38am

I just don't understand the need to try to ruin thread after thread with confrontational know-it-all posts.



n80 1,662 posts

11-10-2018 3:49pm

There are always trolls. The best thing to do....is not what I did....but not to reply at all. Thus the 'removed' posts. The moderator removed a couple but I removed several more of mine. I just have to keep reminding myself that nothing, and I mean nothing, upsets a troll more than being ignored.



firstnot **OP** 232 posts

12-29-2018 11:02pm



I figured the Query I posted was seen as from a "Nut Case" as I never saw any responses in my email. I must have changed a setting.

After reading these comments I feel a lot better knowing that I am not just a Nut case and others experience nearly the same issues.

I tended to think there would not be a successful option/therapy as it does seem to come with age. My hearing ends about 11k now. I went to an ENT who took my money for testing only to announce "You're normal".

Again I want to thank everyone who took the time to share their experiences on the subject.



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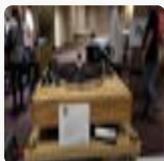
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