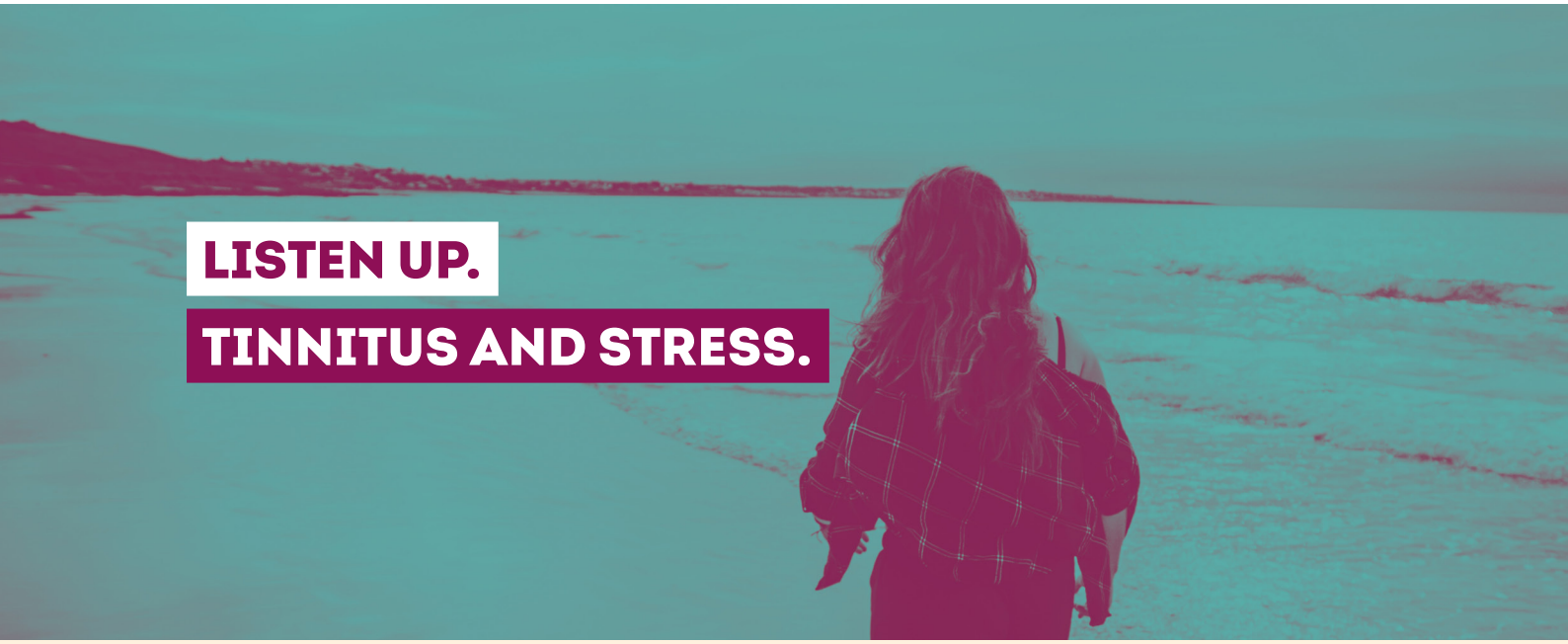
SOUNDFAIR



LISTEN UP.
TINNITUS AND STRESS.

FACT SHEET

It is likely your tinnitus will fluctuate with changes in your overall levels of stress. Through self-awareness you can recognise the signs of stress and act to prevent it from affecting your awareness of tinnitus.

Few of us can escape periods of stress in our lives. Stress can come in many forms; it may be physical, such as neck pain from sitting at the computer, or emotional, such as the loss of a job or relationship. It is important to recognise the impact of these events on how our whole body functions.

For those with tinnitus, increased periods of stress may lead to increased awareness of tinnitus. Likewise, increased awareness of tinnitus can lead to increased stress or may lead to someone experiencing tinnitus for the first time. Whichever is the case for you, feel comforted by the knowledge this need not be permanent. By developing ways to manage stress, you can learn to live well with tinnitus once again.

RECOGNISING SIGNS OF STRESS

While some level of stress can be useful for motivating us to act and protecting us from danger, in excess or for prolonged periods, stress can be detrimental. Stress can look like different things for different people. Here are some common signs of stress to be aware of:

- Racing heart
- Sweating
- Reduced concentration
- Poor sleep
- Increased irritability
- Lack of motivation/increased negative thoughts
- Nausea
- Changes in appetite

If you can recognise you are overly stressed or are likely to be, you may be able to act early and minimise the impact on your tinnitus.

STRATEGIES

- Talk to someone. Connection is vital. Understanding from a family member, friend or peer group can help you through challenging times. Additionally, a counsellor or psychologist can help you recognise and manage the major sources of stress for you.
- Minimise or remove yourself from the stressor, in other words, reduce the number of social engagements, remove yourself from excessive noise or take regular breaks from the computer screen.
- Be kind to yourself. With heightened stress levels, it is important to take care of yourself. Prioritise your time to only focus on important tasks, take a walk, exercise, listen to music or sounds that relax you, have a massage and ensure you are getting adequate sleep.
- Eat a healthy diet and as such avoid excessive intake of salt, sugar coffee, tea and alcohol. While research has not found a strong correlation between tinnitus and particular foods or fluids, excess of anything is discouraged.
- Talk to an audiologist or general practitioner for further assistance. If previously you have been prescribed tinnitus management strategies, you may be advised to start these once again. If it you are using noise therapy, use of hearing aids, relaxation strategies etc, continuation or adjustment of these approaches

SOUNDFAIR

> I was fitted with a pair of hearing aids, introduced sound therapy into my life on a daily basis, cut down on caffeine, and started feeling mentally robust again. I started feeling I was getting control of my life and of my tinnitus.

may be advised so you can reduce the impact of your tinnitus. You can call the Hearing Line 1300 242 842 to talk to an audiologist and be connected with the most suitable option for you.

In some cases, the impacts of tinnitus may lead you to feel you can no longer cope. If you are in need of urgent assistance, please call Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636. While the information provided will not be specific to tinnitus, their expertise in all areas of mental health will ensure you are supported at times of greatest need.

All other, non-urgent persistent matters should be discussed with your audiologist or medical practitioner. Tinnitus Australia is available online and via the Hearing Line to offer extra support.

PROVIDING SUPPORT

If someone you know is suffering from increased awareness of tinnitus, patience, empathy and compassion can help enormously. Recognising their need for assistance; be it quiet, time alone, use of a noisemaker/masking device, assistance to make clinic appointments, help to reduce their workload and/or commitments, can be greatly beneficial. Engage in positive conversation and ask how you can assist and support them during challenging times.

FURTHER READING

Baguley D, Andersson G, McFerran D & McKenna L, (2013) Tinnitus: A Multidisciplinary Approach. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
Szczepek AJ and Mazurek B. Introduction. In: Szczepek A and Mazurek B, [eds]. Tinnitus and Stress: An Interdisciplinary Companion for Healthcare Professionals. Cham: Springer International Publishing; 2017. pp 1-6.

This factsheet is intended to be a guide of a general nature, having regard to general circumstances. The information presented should not be relied on as a substitute for medical advice, independent judgement or assessment by a healthcare professional, with consideration of the particular needs and individual circumstances. This factsheet reflects information available at the time of its preparation, but its currency should be determined having regard to other available information. Tinnitus Australia disclaims all liability to users of the information provided.

Updated: January 2021 To be reviewed: January 2024 Author: Jacqui Trethowan Version 1.0

ADDRESS

1 Hamilton Place
Mount Waverley Victoria. 3149
Phone: (03) 9510 1577
Email: tinnitus@soundfair.org.au

HEARING LINE

1300 242 842

For hearing, social & emotional support, & general enquiries, Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm

LET'S CONNECT

#MoreThanJustEars
#MoreThanJustDevices

SOUNDFAIR
MAKING HEARING SEEN AND PEOPLE HEARD.