



"Read this book and you will see why people from all over the world go to Kevin Hogan for assistance in eliminating or reducing their tinnitus. This book is both inspiring and scientifically sound."

William Horton, Psy. D., Professor of Psychology, Indiana Vocational Technical College

"Using Kevin Hogan's therapeutic model for tinnitus reduction, I have been able to assist tinnitus sufferers in reducing both the distress they experience and the volume of the noise itself. This book helps you help yourself."

Elizabeth J. Nahum, C.Ht., Lindenhurst, NY and Asheville, NC

"...he heard the usual 'you have to live with it,' and he does NOT live with it... This book is a ...helping hand - a light in the darkness... This book is Kevin's gift to us."

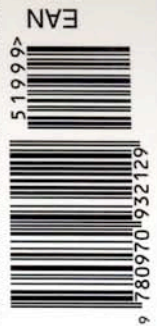
(From the Introduction) Christine Coleman, M.A., MFCC, Executive Director, Hope For Hearing Foundation, Los Angeles

"Kevin Hogan shows great sensitivity for people suffering from tinnitus. It is evident in his published articles, his successful work with clients and the books he has written."

Renata Schedar, Staff Writer, Hearing Health

Kevin Hogan, Ph.D., D.C.H. is the author of numerous books including *Life By Design: Your Handbook for Transformational Living and The Gift*

ISBN 0-9709321-2-X \$19.99

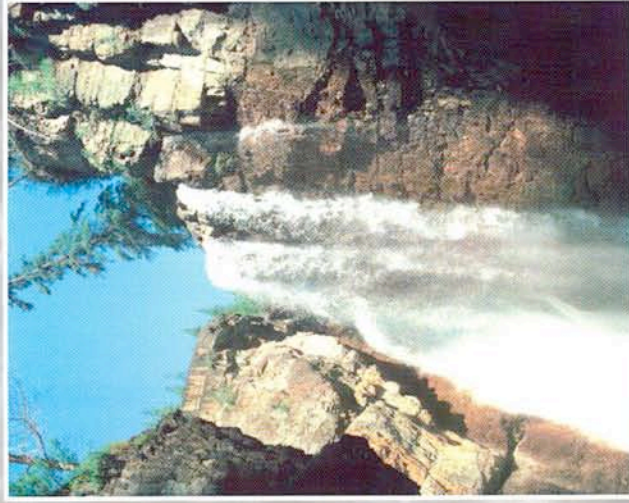


Tinnitus:

Turning The Volume Down

*Proven Strategies for Quieting
the Noise in Your Head*

Revised Edition



Kevin Hogan

CHAPTER FIVE

Effective Treatment Methods for Tinnitus Reduction



Throughout this book numerous treatments for tinnitus while we discussed have been discussed along with causes. In this section, I want to address important and effective therapeutic interventions to put you on the road to greater peace of mind.

Research has shown that there are a few key modalities for tinnitus reduction, and numerous others that work on occasion. **Medication, masking, habituation, and hypnotherapy** are among the most effective methods for treating tinnitus. Biofeedback and massage therapy have been shown to be helpful as well, though we will not discuss them in great detail here. Each of the most effective treatment modalities will now be discussed at some length.

Masking & Tinnitus Habituation Therapy

Most, but not all people who suffer from tinnitus gain benefit through masking and/or habituation.

- **Masking**, a common method of dealing with tinnitus, is the “covering” of the noise that is in the head or ears with noise that is external to the head and ears.
- **Tinnitus Habituation Therapy** is the process of adding broad band white noise in small increments to “re-train the auditory pathways,” so that the sound of the tinnitus no longer creates a negative emotional response. Specifically, the tinnitus sufferer wears a “walkman” or specially made “white noise generators” every day, all the time. The noise produced by the external source creates a smaller distinction between a neutral stimulus and the tinnitus.

When I was travelling on my own road to peace I wore a walkman to bed and all day long, including during my session time with clients. It was an inconvenience, but the process was effective in helping the habituation process. Many others have successfully utilized habituation.

Masking is the “covering” of the noise that is in the head or ears with noise that is external to the head and ears.

Unfortunately, masking and habituation do not work with profoundly deaf people, nor with individuals who have severe hearing loss. These methods are very slow for people with

severe hyperacusis. For those who do have most of their hearing, masking and habituation are interesting options.

One common method of masking is the use of a hearing aid/tinnitus masker. Essentially, a hearing aid is worn in the ear(s) that has tinnitus, and a new sound is generated by the masker to cover the tinnitus. In the habituation process the sound is not turned up to cover the sound, but is set just below the threshold of the tinnitus. This creates a "new" sound for the brain to "find."

Tinnitus maskers that are worn as hearing aids are comfortable to wear, and the white noise is far more pleasant than that of the tinnitus. The drawback to tinnitus maskers is that you must wear them all of the time.

Most tinnitus maskers cost about \$700 to \$1,500 per ear. Batteries will cost about \$100, and must be replaced regularly.

Other types of tinnitus maskers are not worn, but are used by the bedside or in the office.

Commonly, these are white noise generators that can mask or habituate the sound of the tinnitus as well. Some machines produce many tones, so that the user can select a band that covers her tinnitus. Other machines produce sounds that emulate rain fall, ocean waves, and other pleasant

environmental sounds. These machines are inexpensive and remarkably valuable to the sufferer of tinnitus.

I used a personal stereo with headphones as a method of both habituating and masking my tinnitus for two reasons. First, the cost was minimal, and environmental and classical music audiocassettes were a superior option for me when contrasted to the static sound of white noise. Secondly, I believe that listening to sounds to which I already had a positive emotional response created speedier habituation than I might have attained with neutral or slightly negative static/white noise sounds.

Some people find that de-tuning their radio to a place in between FM stations, with static, is very helpful in masking tinnitus. Others select audio cassettes that cover the tinnitus or help habituate it. Classical music and new age music tapes have proven effective in using personal stereos for relief.

I highly recommend the use of "habitators" or a "walkman." If you do not decide in favor of this therapeutic option, it is a very good idea to constantly have background noise "on" so that you experience less stress due to tinnitus, on a daily basis. Background noise makes the tinnitus less detectable in almost all clients I have worked with.

Some of my clients have followed in my footsteps and decided to wear and listen to their walkman all night with headphones. Having comfortable earphones or "dots" that actually fit into the ear is critical to sleeping with ease.

Tinnitus Habituation Therapy

Dr. Pawel Jastreboff has pioneered research in the tinnitus habituation process at the University of Maryland. I have

Tinnitus Habituation Therapy is the process of adding broad-band white noise in small increments to "re-train the auditory pathways," so that the sound of the tinnitus no longer creates a negative emotional response.

attempted to describe an adaptation of Dr. Jastreboff's strategy for tinnitus habituation on the next page. I would recommend contacting Dr. Jastreboff's office for further information about THT. His research in the field is widely respected, and has been critical in developing therapeutic interventions that are helping thousands of people worldwide. Please consult your audiologist for additional information, and be certain to consult your medical practitioner before beginning any treatment for tinnitus.

Self-Help Program for Habituation

- 1) Once it is determined, through testing, that there is no major medical problem causing tinnitus, tinnitus habituation therapy can be attempted with tinnitus white noise generators. Any manufacturer is probably as good as another.
- 2) It is very important for the individual to accept the understanding that tinnitus is similar to chronic pain: It is annoying but it is not life threatening. Tinnitus can be eliminated, or at least reduced.
- 3) It takes time to make progress in habituation therapy. Patience is important. Most people do not experience instant results in habituation therapy.
- 4) A tinnitus "masker" or white noise generator should be used during all waking hours.
- 5) When beginning your self help therapy, you should use a very soft level of white noise. Use a level that you can barely hear in each ear.
- 6) Each week turn up the volume of the generators just a bit.

- 7) Stop turning up the volume when it is no longer quiet, but not extremely loud.
- 8) If the noise level ever increases the tinnitus of the individual, reduce the volume of the generator.
- 9) Do not increase the volume of the generator over that of the tinnitus.

This self help program for habituation is based on my work with clients and the published papers of Pawel Jastreboff, R. R. Coles, Jean Baskill, Jonathon Hazel, and Jacqueline Sheldrake. My simple outline is not necessarily endorsed by the researchers in any way. My retraining therapy model is simply one that can be used by an individual while waiting what may be years to see one of the professionals in the habituation field. If you are fortunate, this self help therapy will succeed before you ever see one of the leaders in the profession.

The cause of tinnitus is normally not important when using habituation. Habituation is completely safe and poses no side effects. At the University of Maryland, over an 18-month period, the following results were published:

84 percent have significant improvement in both decreased annoyance of the tinnitus and definite habituation to its perception...

"Tinnitus Habituation Therapy: The University of Maryland Tinnitus and Hyperacusis Center Experience," Douglas Mattox, M.D., Pawel Jastreboff, Ph.D., William Gray, M.D., *International Journal of Tinnitus*, 1997.