

Tinnitus Activities Treatment

Concentration Session

Overview

1. Things that affect concentration
2. How tinnitus affects concentration
3. Strategies to improve your concentration

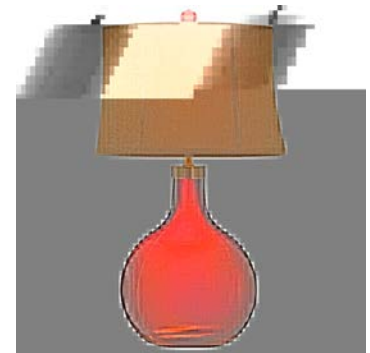
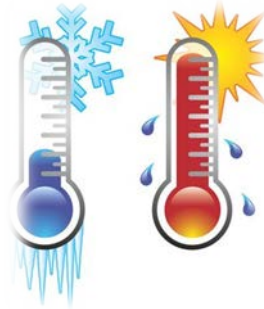
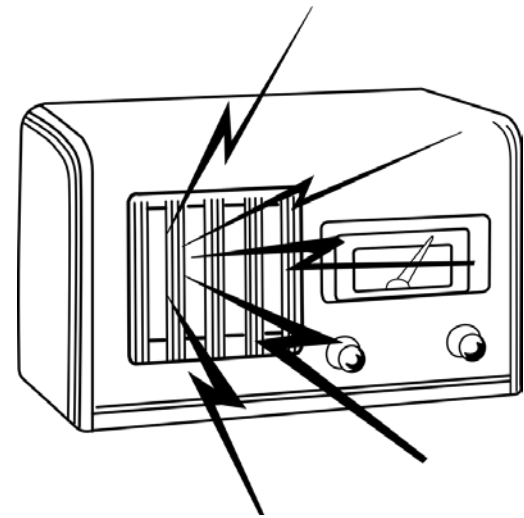
Concentration is Important

- Necessary to complete many tasks
- Inability to concentrate results in frustration and stress
- Good concentration will enable you to remember more



1. Things That Affect Concentration

- The environment:
 - Noise
 - Distractions
 - Temperature
 - Lighting



Things That Affect Concentration



- Your physical state:
 - Hunger
 - Fatigue
 - Current health status



Things That Affect Concentration



- Your emotional state:
 - Anxiety
 - Fear
 - Boredom

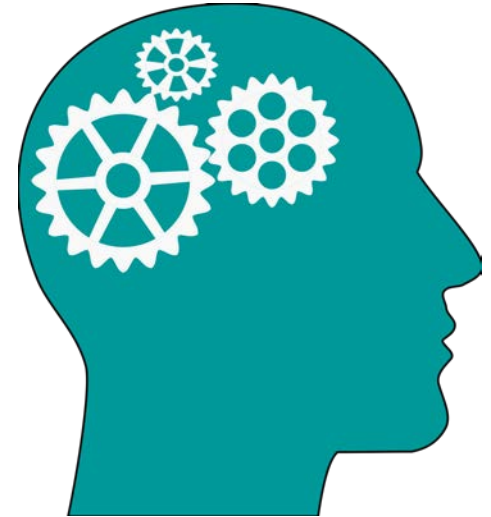


Your Concentration

- What problems with concentration do you have?
- How do you feel about not being able to concentrate?



2. How Tinnitus Affects Concentration



- We perform best when we focus on one thing at a time
- We can multi-task, but we are less efficient
- When we focus attention to our tinnitus, it is harder to concentrate on other things

Effects of Tinnitus on Concentration

- Observe the effects of tinnitus on your concentration for:
 - Simple tasks (filing)
 - Complex tasks (learning new computer game)
- Simple tasks may not be stimulating enough--tinnitus fills in gaps
- Complex tasks are more demanding—tinnitus is less noticeable
- Effects vary person to person

3. Strategies to Improve Concentration



1. Interpret tinnitus as not important
2. Eliminate distractions
3. Stay focused
4. Adjust work habits
5. Decrease prominence of tinnitus
6. Take control of your attention

1. Interpret Tinnitus as Not Important

- Tinnitus is not threatening your health or hearing
- Tinnitus is the result of increased spontaneous activity
- If tinnitus is important, it will be monitored
- When you decide tinnitus is not important, you can begin to not attend to it



2. Eliminate Distractions

- Choose a comfortable environment
- Eliminate unwanted noise
- Avoid hunger and tiredness
- Set aside a time for worrying or daydreaming



3. Stay Focused

- Actively participate
- Take notes
- Ask questions
- Repeat information
- Organize and categorize important points



4. Adjust Work Habits



- Work in short time spans
- Set a realistic pace
- Take breaks as needed
- Reward yourself when task is complete

Consider task difficulty

1

Consider simple and complex tasks

2

Attempt to focus on a task for a brief period

- Vary the amount of time spent on task
- Build up time spent on each task

3

Do not restrict yourself to simple tasks

- Easier for tinnitus to fill in gaps

4

Try more challenging tasks

- Tinnitus may be less intrusive when you have to concentrate more

5. Decrease Prominence of Tinnitus

- Use background sound in the environment



- If you have difficulty concentrating at work, try playing background music or sounds

Decrease Prominence of Tinnitus

- Choose a soft, pleasant sound you enjoy
 - Nature sounds (waves, rain)
 - Music (calm, soothing, steady, classical, piano)
 - Broadband noise ("ssshhh")

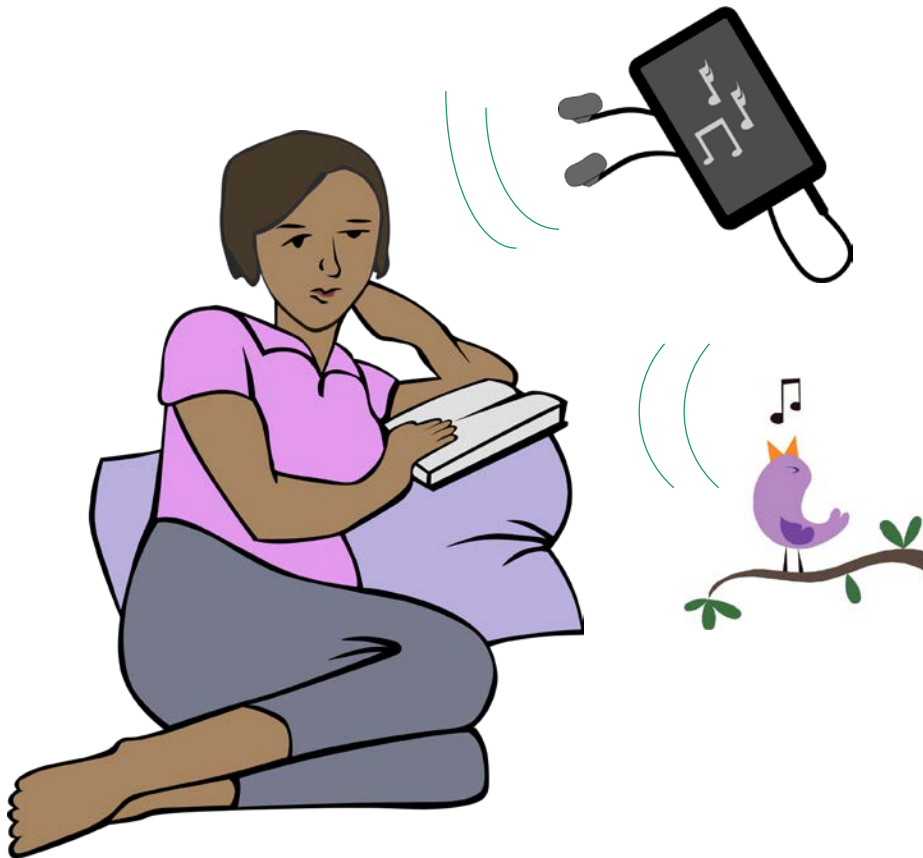


6. Take Control of Your Attention

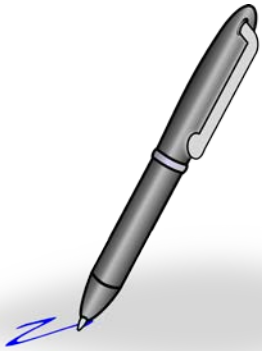
- The focus of our attention is largely under voluntary control
- You can learn to control the focus of your attention under various conditions
- By bringing the focus of attention under control, tinnitus-related distress will be reduced at certain times



Attention Control Exercises



- Learn to switch attention from one stimulus to another (e.g. object, sensation, thought, activity) at will
- Allows you to refocus your attention from your tinnitus onto other stimuli



Visual Attention Example

1. Focus on a nearby object (pen, book)
2. Study that object
3. Now switch your attention to looking in the distance (e.g. out the window, down the hall)
4. Switch back and forth between the two several times
5. Notice that you can choose which item you visually pay attention to while ignoring other things around you

Sound Attention Example

1. Listen for a prominent sound around you (e.g. people talking, heater noise)
2. Now listen to a different sound in the room
3. Continue to try and focus on certain sounds while ignoring other sounds around you



Sound and Tinnitus Example

1. Pay attention to a sound in the room (e.g. background music, heater noise, etc)
2. Now switch your attention to listening to your tinnitus
3. Switch back to listening to the sound in the room and ignore your tinnitus
4. Practice paying attention to other sounds while ignoring your tinnitus

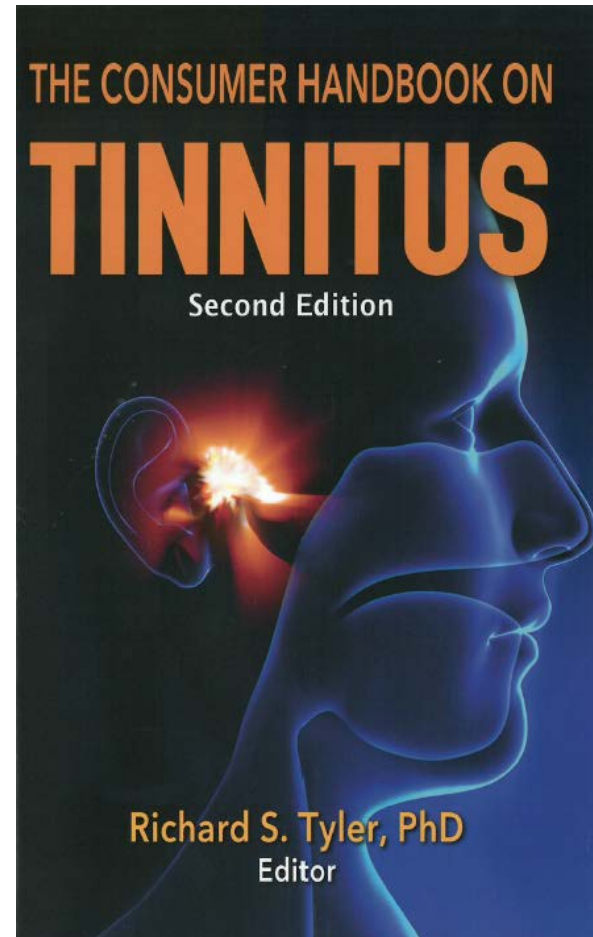
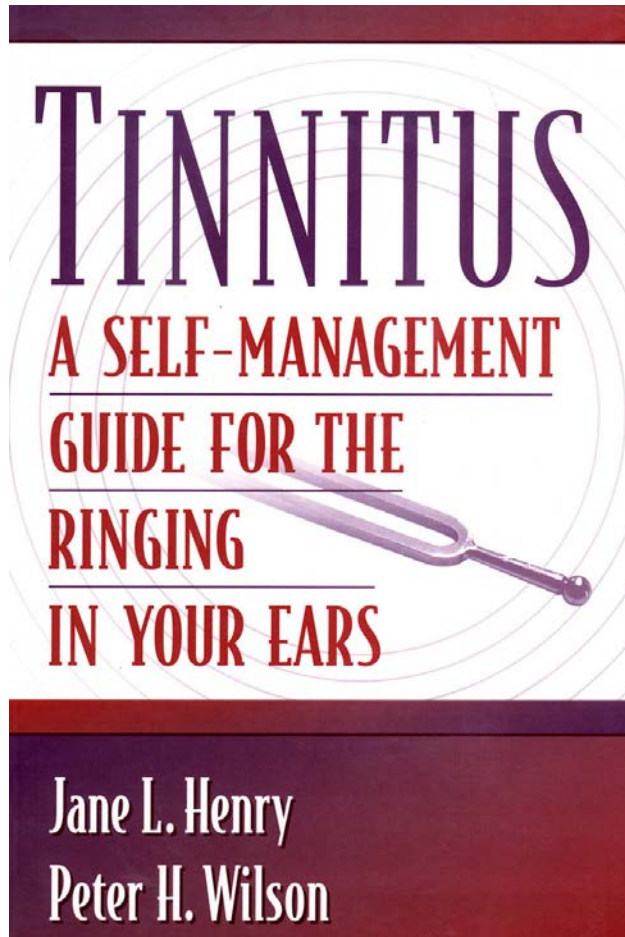


Sound and Reading Example



1. Read with noise or music in the background
2. Focus on your reading
3. Now focus on the noise or music
4. Switch your focus back to your reading
5. Continue to switch back and forth
6. Practice so you are able to pay attention to your reading while ignoring the noise or music

Self-help books on Attention Control Techniques



Activities

- Utilize the strategies discussed to improve concentration
 1. Interpret tinnitus as not important
 2. Eliminate distractions
 3. Stay focused
 4. Adjust work habits
 5. Decrease prominence of tinnitus
 6. Take control of your attention



Activities

- Remember to use background sound to make tinnitus less prominent
- Practice attention control exercises
 1. Visual
 2. Sound
 3. Sound plus tinnitus
 4. Sound plus reading

