

Tinnitus Case Study – Personal story from one of our members.

1. Introduction

One of our members, we will call him Simon, asked us to share his story in the hope it would encourage others with tinnitus. Simon's situation was a classic example of how stress can lead to tinnitus and so the cycle starts, the tinnitus makes the anxiety worse, which makes the tinnitus worse etc. I will leave Simon to tell his story and how he has broken the above cycle.

2. Simon's personal story about his tinnitus journey

This is a summary of what has been happening and actions I have taken, or found helpful, some of which might help others. It is now 4 months since I became acutely aware of my tinnitus, and started on this journey of trying to deal with what was a very distressing time for me.

This email is also to thoroughly acknowledge and endorse the help & support from being a member of Tinnitus Tunes and working with Andrew Newman at www.acupressure.co.nz has provided. Both sources have been very instrumental in helping me deal with my tinnitus.

The date I recall was 7 June when my tinnitus level seemed to crash in at about an 8/10 of high frequency sound. This was a bad day and followed by some very bad weeks. The onset (my date of awareness) was accompanied by deep anxiety and some very low moments in my mood. At that time, I was dealing with high workloads and a great deal of pressure responding to the needs of three elderly family members.

I initially looked to medical help, and got some, via a pill bottle, where anti-depressants, and anti-anxiety medications were prescribed plus I grasped at all sorts of interventions that I hoped would help. This included; Physiotherapy, Chiropractor, and an ENT specialist. Anti-anxiety medication (Benzos) did provide temporary help but it only addressed the symptom not the cause.

I have come to realise, over several months, what everyone knows and has been written about by others.... That tinnitus cannot be cured but it can be managed, particularly with help and positive support.

My Tinnitus has two levels mainly.

A back ground noise of about 3/10, which is similar to the sound of cicadas in a forest on a summers day. I can manage this situation easily now and usually can forget about it for hours or even days.

The other level is 8/10 of high frequency noise, which is a bit like fingernails down a black board. This situation is the real baddie, and it is understanding what triggers this that is the secret to living with my tinnitus. The number one cause is worrying about the 8/10 noise as this will almost guarantee its onset, and cause it to remain. In other words, it sets up a downward cycle that has to be broken (and that is where Tinnitus Tunes and Andrew come in).

Other triggers are tension, stress, tiredness, and cheap red wine. Actually, booze is a quick fix, but not for long as the next day, the demonic noise returns remorselessly.

The two main weapons I have learnt to use that are linked:

1. Distraction. The Tinnitus Tunes programme of brain retraining, masking noise, relaxation, keeping busy, a good night's sleep and techniques around all of these have been a lifesaver.

2. Relaxation. Reduction of tension & anxiety, improving my posture, mindfulness, positive thinking and inner calm, has been what Andrew has provided with acupressure plus his holistic approach to overall wellbeing.

I am so grateful for both. Your services and positive support have helped me and I thoroughly recommend both as a crucial part of dealing with tinnitus.

There are conditions.

The biggie is accepting that there is no silver bullet. Then realising that you have to be patient, trusting and believing.

We all hope for a quick fix...pills help at the beginning while we start to adjust, and trying the various specialists is important as otherwise we will always wonder what if I had tried? One visit to a specialist like Andrew (an acupressure specialist) will not fix your underlying tension and tinnitus either. In fact the tinnitus may get worse to start with, and acupressure may not work for very one.

For me it has been a part of my acceptance of what I need to do and how to do it. Relax, de-stress, take your mind to a place where the noise fits the imaginary environment I close my eyes and I am walking along a sand track in a sun lit forest listening to the cicadas. Alternatively, I walk along the beach and listen to the waves, or I concentrate on the sound of a motor bike. Anything but thinking about the tinnitus.

Fact is that it is a slow journey, but it does get better. Like getting over the death of a loved one, time is a great healer. I have come to think of this as something I need to recover from. In addition, recovery means getting used to it, which will take time and it takes patience, trust and belief.

So thanks Tinnitus Tunes and thanks Andrew. My tinnitus journey is not over but it is going in the right direction thanks in no small way to your help.

www.tinnitustunes.com

www.acupressure.co.nz