

# The Tinnitus Clinic Treatment Program

## A Trimodal Approach to Tinnitus Adaptation

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## Introduction

Persistent tinnitus can be a distressing auditory experience a person may encounter. While the perception of sound without an external source is relatively common, the level of distress it produces varies greatly between individuals.

For some, tinnitus is little more than an occasional background sensation. For others, it becomes intrusive and disruptive, affecting sleep, concentration, emotional wellbeing, and overall quality of life.

Traditional tinnitus management has often focused primarily on the auditory system or on psychological coping strategies in isolation. Contemporary neuroscience increasingly suggests that tinnitus distress arises from the interaction of several brain systems responsible for attention, emotional salience, and cognitive interpretation.

The treatment program described here reflects this broader understanding.

The Tinnitus Clinic program uses a **trimodal approach**, integrating three complementary treatment components:

- **Counselling for Tinnitus Adaptation**
- **Clinical Hypnosis**
- **Neurofeedback Training**

Together, these approaches aim to help the brain gradually adapt to the tinnitus signal and reduce the distress associated with it.

## Entry Requirements for the Program

Before commencing the program, clients undertake an **initial tinnitus consultation**.

This session allows the clinician to obtain a detailed understanding of:

- tinnitus history and onset
- characteristics of the sound
- associated symptoms such as hyperacusis or sleep disturbance
- psychological impact of tinnitus
- previous treatments or investigations

Following this assessment, the clinician and client determine whether the structured program is appropriate.

## Medical and Audiological Assessment

Clients entering the program are expected to have undertaken appropriate **audiological and medical assessment**.

This may include evaluation by one or more of the following:

- Audiologist (a recent audiogram is a requirement)
- General Practitioner
- Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) specialist (copy of scan reports is required as appropriate)

These assessments ensure that any underlying medical conditions requiring investigation have been appropriately addressed.

The Tinnitus Clinic program is designed to assist individuals experiencing **persistent tinnitus distress following appropriate medical evaluation**.

## The Trimodal Treatment Model

The treatment program integrates three complementary approaches that influence different aspects of tinnitus persistence.

<b>Component</b>	<b>Primary Role</b>
Cognitive Therapy	Understanding and reinterpretation
Clinical Hypnosis	Emotional regulation
Neurofeedback	Brain state regulation

Together these approaches aim to support the brain's natural capacity to **adapt to internally generated sensory signals**.

## Counselling for Tinnitus Adaptation

The counselling component of the program helps clients develop a clearer understanding of tinnitus and modify patterns of thought and behaviour that can unintentionally reinforce tinnitus distress.

Common patterns that maintain tinnitus distress include:

- constant monitoring of the sound
- catastrophic interpretations
- heightened threat perception
- emotional reactivity

Cognitive therapy focuses on helping clients:

- understand tinnitus in a new way
- reduce monitoring behaviour
- reinterpret the meaning of the sound
- restore confidence and control
- re-engage with normal life activities

This component is delivered progressively across the twelve-week program.

## Clinical Hypnosis Component

Clinical hypnosis is used to help clients develop a calmer and more adaptive relationship with the tinnitus signal.

While cognitive therapy provides understanding and cognitive reframing, hypnosis works at the level of **experience and emotional regulation**.

Many individuals with tinnitus develop heightened vigilance and anxiety toward the sound. Hypnosis helps the nervous system move toward calmer states while introducing new perspectives regarding the tinnitus experience.

Within the program, hypnosis recordings are delivered **during neurofeedback sessions**, reinforcing relaxation and adaptive attentional states.

## Structure of the Hypnosis Program

The hypnosis component includes:

- eight guided hypnosis recordings delivered during neurofeedback sessions
- two take-home deep alpha relaxation recordings for daily practice
- progressive access to hypnosis scripts across the program

The recordings are introduced in a structured psychological progression.

### Hypnosis Sequence

1. Experiencing Your Tinnitus Differently
2. Calm and Safety
3. Putting Tinnitus Distress Aside
4. Finding Hope

5. Developing Balance and Confidence
6. Strength and Control
7. Moving Forward into a Positive Future
8. Freedom and Growth

Each recording builds upon the previous session, gradually guiding clients toward increasing calmness, confidence, and emotional distance from tinnitus.

## Neurofeedback Component

Neurofeedback is a **non-invasive method** that helps the brain learn to regulate its own patterns of activity.

Small sensors placed on the scalp measure electrical activity produced by the brain. These sensors do **not deliver electricity to the brain**; they simply record neural signals in a manner similar to a medical EEG.

Through real-time feedback, the brain can gradually learn to shift toward more stable and adaptive patterns of functioning.

## Baseline EEG Assessment

Before training begins, a **baseline EEG assessment** is conducted to determine the client's typical brain activity patterns.

This helps identify whether the nervous system appears to be operating in a state of:

- under-arousal
- over-arousal
- balanced regulation

Training sites and parameters are then selected accordingly.

## Brainwave Training Targets

Neurofeedback training focuses on three key brainwave patterns.

### Delta Activity

Delta waves are very slow brain rhythms normally associated with deep sleep.

Excessive delta activity during waking states may reflect inefficient neural processing. Training therefore aims to **reduce excessive delta activity**.

### Beta Activity

Beta waves are associated with active thinking and alertness.

Excessive high-frequency beta activity may be associated with heightened arousal or nervous system tension. Training therefore aims to **reduce excessive beta activity**.

## Alpha Activity

Alpha waves are associated with relaxed but alert awareness.

Encouraging stable alpha activity helps promote balanced neural functioning. Training therefore aims to **increase stable alpha activity**.

## Training Process

During training sessions:

- sensors measure brain activity
- software analyses activity in real time
- pleasant auditory feedback is provided when the desired brain state occurs

In this program, the feedback typically consists of **natural sounds such as birdsong**, which act as a reward signal to the brain.

Over time, the brain learns to produce these more stable patterns more consistently.

## Integration with Hypnosis

During neurofeedback sessions, clients listen to hypnosis recordings through headphones.

This combined approach supports:

- relaxation and focused attention
- reduced emotional reactivity to tinnitus
- reinforcement of adaptive brain states

## Practical Preparation for Neurofeedback

Preparation requirements are simple.

Clients are asked to ensure that:

- hair is clean
- no hair gels or sprays are used prior to sessions

This helps ensure good sensor contact with the scalp.

A separate instruction sheet is provided before treatment begins.

# Twelve-Week Treatment Timeline

The Tinnitus Clinic program is delivered across **twelve structured weekly sessions**.

Each session integrates:

- counselling therapy
- hypnosis
- neurofeedback training

<b>Week</b>	<b>Counselling Focus</b>	<b>Clinical Hypnosis Theme</b>
1	Understanding tinnitus	Experiencing tinnitus differently
2	Attention and perception	Calm and safety
3	The brain's alarm system	Putting tinnitus distress aside
4	Reframing tinnitus meaning	Finding hope
5	Breaking monitoring habits	Balance and confidence
6	Acceptance and adaptation	Strength and control
7	Stress and tinnitus	Moving toward a positive future
8	Sleep and night tinnitus	Freedom and growth
9	Rebuilding confidence	Reinforcement
10	Re-engaging with life	Reinforcement
11	Managing tinnitus spikes	Reinforcement
12	Consolidation and future plan	Reinforcement

## Home Practice

Clients are encouraged to practise between sessions.

Home practice may include:

- listening to deep alpha recordings
- reviewing hypnosis scripts
- applying cognitive strategies learned in sessions

Regular practice helps reinforce the brain's adaptation process.

## Outcome Monitoring

Progress may be monitored using validated tinnitus assessment measures such as:

- **Tinnitus Handicap Inventory (THI)**
- **Tinnitus Functional Index (TFI)**

Clients may also track:

- sleep quality
- distress levels
- perceived control over tinnitus

Monitoring progress helps both clinician and client recognise improvements over the course of treatment.

Real-time EEG recordings during sessions are discussed and provide additional insights into progress.

## Conclusion

The Tinnitus Clinic treatment program integrates counselling therapy, clinical hypnosis, and neurofeedback training within a structured twelve-week framework.

This approach aims to support the brain's natural capacity to adapt to tinnitus by addressing:

- interpretation of the signal
- emotional responses
- underlying neural regulation

Through this process many clients develop increased confidence, reduced distress, and an improved ability to live well despite the presence of tinnitus.

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