

Sound Therapy for Hyperacusis

With sound therapy, your ears are getting re-acquainted with sound. Sound therapy can be delivered in CD or sound generator form (the latter is like a small hearing aid worn in the ear). Some individuals are so afraid of noise that they wear earplugs all the time. Their ears become so unbelievably sound sensitive that it is a very hard to get out of that hole. This is rare - very rare. Even those people, if they can get past the fear, can come back.

Sound therapy takes time and patience. It is ear rehab and requires at least 2 hours a day. This is less convenient to accomplish with a CD because you are tied to a CD player. Sound generators are fitted to your ears and you can go about your normal routine. Between the two delivery systems of noise (CD player and sound generators) the convenience of use is the main thing to consider. Most people feel that counselling is an integral part of successfully completing the retraining process. Even though it is a 'given' that there are bumps in the road, many patients need continual reassurance that general noise is not hurting them on days they feel it is. Some days we all need a helper!

Sound therapy requires self-motivation. It takes someone who will say to themselves, "I am not going to let this thing beat me. I am going to do everything I can to get my life back to normal."

Individuals who suddenly become aware of hyperacusis go through a distressing crisis period where it may be difficult for the patient to sleep restfully at night. Getting proper sleep and reducing stress levels are very important and some medication may initially be needed to help facilitate this.

The underlying reasons why some people are more susceptible to ear problems than others is not understood. Of the various catalysts for the onset of hyperacusis, noise is the most common and preventable one. Avoid really loud sounds whenever possible and wear ear protection when needed, but not in normal everyday sounds.

Those who become aware of hyperacusis may overprotect their ears because they have a fear of noise (phonophobia). For those who suddenly develop severe hyperacusis, it may be necessary to use ear protection so that the patient's ears have an opportunity to regroup and recover. After a few months however, over protection will only further collapse ones tolerance to sound. The patient is in a Catch 22 and walks a fine line between over protecting and under protecting their ears. It is important to check with others that you have not fallen into the trap of overprotecting your ears from normal everyday sounds.