

## How a Broken Toe Helped My Tinnitus

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It's not like my feet were pretty to begin with. It didn't help when I dropped a heavy flooring sample – the thin edge – on my left foot. The toe *next* to the big one is now *the* biggest one.



We've all stubbed or bruised or broken a toe at some point. And if you're one of the lucky few who haven't, be grateful; the pain is far greater than you'd expect from such a small body part. It throbs when you're not walking. When you *are*, each step is a lightning bolt of agony.

But there *is* one benefit to this stupid accident – it has taken my mind off my tinnitus and hyperacusis (often referred to by sufferers as "T" or "H", or by me as tinni-cusis). One form of discomfort in a momentary exchange for another.

Re-creation of TOE

**BREAKING.** (Do not try this at home.) While scientists around the world are apparently racing to discover the

Big One – a cure for tinnitus – there are a few existing therapies to help relieve the *perception* of tinnitus, such as masking, hearing aids and cochlear implants, Tinnitus Retraining Therapy, biofeedback, etc. I have tried several, but my T is complicated, loud, and never stops, although the sounds change throughout the day so I don't get bored with the same combination of roar-hum-and-whoosh noises. Until I discovered the benefit of pain *elsewhere* in the body, only three things have given me a decent break from the head noise: sleep, wine, and focusing intently on something else such as good conversation, a good show on Netflix, or a good sleep. Also, wine.



Clearly, re-focusing the brain is the #1 Best Solution, and moaning over a broken toe falls into that category.

Another benefit of toe-over-tinnitus is that people tend to be more sympathetic to something they understand.

*“Hi Gael, how are you doing?”*

*“Well, my tinnitus is pretty bad today.”*

*“Oh dear.” (They look a bit concerned and then change the subject.)*

**OR**

*“Hey Gael, how’s it going?”*

*“Well, I broke my toe and it’s pretty sore.”*

*“OMG! That happened to ME and it hurts like HELL! You poor thing.”*

When you have tinnitus, you look for relief and comfort wherever you can. While I wouldn’t recommend the broken toe trick, I do suggest keeping your mind engaged with anything not related to your T and H.

Oh, excuse me, please, I have to get another ice pack for my foot. In the meantime, I’m always open to good suggestions for Tinnitus Avoidance.