



BeyondDuty+

How Tinnitus Develops In Veterans

The most accepted theory suggests **tinnitus arises due to maladaptive neural plasticity**. Essentially, when the brain stops receiving normal input from damaged hair cells in the cochlea, it attempts to compensate by **increasing activity in the auditory nerve**, and it is this **hyperactivity that is interpreted as a ringing or buzzing** sound.

The Main Mechanisms of Tinnitus Consist of:

- Loss of inhibition in auditory pathways
- Increased spontaneous neural firing
- Changes in brain regions involved in emotion and attention

These processes can make tinnitus persistent and distressing.

Why Understanding the Causes of Tinnitus Can Help Veterans

- Helps target treatments effectively
- Reduces stigma by explaining it is a neurological process
- Supports early intervention strategies

Co-Occurring Conditions: PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)



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VETERANS
WELFARE GROUP

Tinnitus rarely occurs in isolation among veterans. **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** and **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)** often complicate both diagnosis and treatment. Research indicates that these conditions can exacerbate tinnitus symptoms, creating a cycle of distress that impacts daily functioning. Veterans with PTSD are more likely to experience severe tinnitus, highlighting the need for integrated treatment approaches.

How Co-Occurring Conditions Affect Tinnitus

The limbic system, which is responsible for emotional regulation, interacts closely with the auditory pathways. This is why veterans with PTSD often describe tinnitus as intrusive and inescapable. TBI, particularly blast-related injuries, can damage both the ear and the brain areas that process sound.

Signs That Tinnitus May Be Linked to PTSD or TBI

- Flashbacks or hypervigilance when tinnitus is prominent
- Memory or concentration difficulties
- Severe irritability or emotional swings triggered by noise
- History of blast exposure or concussions

We understand how challenging it can be to manage multiple conditions at once. We believe that integrated care, which addresses mental health, hearing, and neurological health simultaneously, offers the best chance for veterans to recover.

Getting Help and Support

If you are living with tinnitus, you are not alone. Our team at Veterans Welfare Group is dedicated to supporting veterans through **comprehensive tinnitus and hearing loss assessments, targeted treatment referrals**, and practical assistance with **resettlement, employment, and rehabilitation**. Our team



includes veterans with lived experience who understand firsthand the challenges tinnitus can bring.

How We Can Assist

Our specialists at Veteran Welfare Group can guide you through the process of getting help, from arranging expert appointments to providing resources about hearing protection and treatment options.

You deserve support that respects your service and your health needs. Whether you're newly discharged or have lived with tinnitus, help is available.

Contact Us

For more information and support, get in touch with our advisors and veterans with lived experience today.



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