



## Hyperacusis can be cured !

My name is Gaëtan. I am 37 years old and live in Brussels, where I work in a public administration.

After an acoustic trauma in July 2013, I suffered from tinnitus and disabling hyperacusis that worsened with time: all the noises of everyday life made me suffer. I could no longer go to restaurants and in noisy public places. The sound of car traffic was very painful and going to work became a real challenge, despite my protective ear plugs...

I went to many ENT doctors who generally told me that there was no solution or treatment available. It was an irreversible pathology caused by the destruction of hair cells and I had to "live with it" for the rest of my life.

I learned later that this paradigm was wrong and that my hearing was not destroyed. In the meantime I tried various therapies, which were all unsatisfactory or even useless (TRT, acupuncture, sophrology, hypnosis, reiki, neurofeedback, the Tomatis method, food supplements, and Ginkgo biloba). I was getting desperate.

One day, I discovered by chance on the Internet, an audioprothesist based in La Rochelle, who had been studying tinnitus and hyperacusis for 20 years. She had developed an acoustic therapy. My dream of a cure became reality: my hyperacusis is now gone and my tinnitus no longer bothers me (it is almost non-existent)!

It started with an initial medical check-up, during which the audioprothesist took me through a "discomfort test" to measure my tolerance levels. For the test, I was using a headset and the audioprothesist sent sounds via the headset. Very low at first and then, she increased the sound by steps of 5 decibels. When it became too loud, I just had to push a button. Thanks to the test, I was able, for the first time, to have some actual data on my hyperacusis.

During the same initial check-up (which lasted 4h30), the audioprothesist helped me discover some underlying emotional problems that contributed to the development of hyperacusis and tinnitus symptoms. This is a key component of the therapy as hyperacusis and tinnitus appear as a response of our body to an underlying emotional problem (concomitant with a dysfunction triggered by an outside cause – an acoustic trauma in my case - or triggered from within by something like an otitis).

The "emotional" side was discussed with the audioprothesist at the beginning or the end of each session review. Then, came the nice part of the treatment: I just had to sit in one of the comfortable armchairs of the listening room for the daily sound therapy session.

I followed the "Øreblue protocol" developed by the audioprothesist during 4 sessions of 2 weeks, with 2 hours/day of listening to personalized sounds selected in using my own audiometric assessment (hearing, hyperacusis level, frequency and intensity of tinnitus, for each ear). That therapy works! Not just for me. All the people who took the therapy at the same as me are now cured! For me, the improvements were quite gradual and relatively linear as I was going through the listening sessions. My hyperacusis chart is now at the top (100 decibels on low frequencies and close to 120 decibels for mid frequencies).

For years we have been waiting for solutions, for medical advances on a pathology seemingly impossible to treat (we felt left behind and the medical world was not interested in our pathology...).

Finally, things have changed for the best. What a relief !

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