



EARS RINGING

Staying Healthy with Dr. Aieta, N.D.

Dr. Aieta,

I have been suffering from constant ringing in my ears for several years. It is gradually getting worse, and my doctor tells me there is nothing he can do for it. Is there anything that you can suggest to help with this very annoying problem?

Eric J.

What you are describing is called

tinnitus, and its cause is typically hard to determine. Some have blamed circulatory problems, high blood pressure, trauma to the inner ear, head or neck, antibiotic or anti-inflammatory use, ear wax, tumors or growths, and even some foods that are rich in salicylates, the same ingredient found in aspirin.

As with any condition I see, I always work closely with the patient's diet by first eliminating foods that can cause allergic reactions, as well as sugar and refined carbohydrates, which can be contributing factors to problems. I find that maintaining steady blood sugar seems to reduce occurrences. In fact, I had one patient's tinnitus completely resolve after removing the chemical sweetener aspartame.

A few supplements have proven effective in treating tinnitus, and I have used some of these myself with great results

with a number of my patients. The herb Ginkgo biloba has been reported to be helpful in some studies at a dosage of 80 milligrams of a standardized extract, three times a day.

In another study, the supplementation of zinc for one month resulted in reduced tinnitus in 52 percent of cases. I always run a blood test for zinc deficiency in any patient with tinnitus, and it's usually on the low side in almost all of them. In addition, I always balance out the zinc supplementation with copper.

A lack of B12 can also lead to tinnitus. B12 injections are the fastest way to get blood levels up and relieve symptoms, but sublingual forms also work well. Vitamins in sublingual form, which means under the tongue, are absorbed directly in the bloodstream, bypassing the digestive system and getting to work faster.

At present, I have three patients with tinnitus who are seeing — or *hearing* — great results from once-a-month acupuncture. Initially, we had to do it once a week, but we've been able to gradually stretch out the treatments as symptoms improve. Naturopathic spinal manipulation, similar to chiropractic manipulation, can also be extremely beneficial for helping resolve symptoms.

So, if your medical doctor has told you there is nothing you can do for your tinnitus, don't give up. Try a natural approach; you may be very pleased with the results.

Dr. Frank Aieta is a board-certified and licensed Naturopathic Physician with a private practice in West Hartford, Conn. If there is a topic you would like to see addressed, e-mail him at DrAieta@aol.com, or visit www.DrAieta.com.

MUSCLE SORENESS

Women's Fitness with Lisa Thomas

If you workout, then you know muscle soreness.

Even if you've never stepped into a gym, you can experience it from life's activities, like painting the house, shoveling snow or even mowing the lawn.

Twenty-four to 48 hours after a hard workout, most people experience soreness in the body part that was used. This is called Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness, or DOMS.

This is caused by tiny microscopic tears that occur in the muscle as a result of high-intensity exercise (weight training, intense running, etc.). After the workout, the muscle begins to rebuild itself (provided it is allowed enough time and nutrients to recover). This is the rebuilding process that creates a muscle that is bigger and stronger than before. In other words, your muscles are gaining strength and growing. (Did you realize that your muscles grow when you are at rest? Pretty cool, huh?)

DOMS pain is different from the burning sensation and pump you feel during a workout. It's important to learn the difference between DOMS pain and the pain you get from an injury. DOMS is often used as an indication of a productive workout, as it means you've trained intensely enough to break down muscle tissues.

Beginners experience severe DOMS, and, as a result, might feel discouraged

at first. However, the human body is an amazing thing, and even the beginner's body will slowly adapt to the workload, and eventually these days of soreness will be less severe.

We need to constantly shock our body with new routines and progressive overload to steadily stimulate muscle growth. Expect the soreness to return when you try something new at the gym.

If soreness is minor, then you should definitely continue to train.

As blood gets into the area, and your body temperature increases, the remaining soreness will dissipate. When there is a substantial amount of soreness from the last workout, this is a sign that you have not recovered enough and your body is still healing. Listen to your body and take it easy on days like that. Just go for a cardio workout and skip the weights for the day.

You can probably reduce soreness by stretching the body part after the workout, and by getting circulation into the area with cardio. If you constantly ignore the signs, and if you keep training and breaking down muscle tissue before it has a chance to recover, the effect will be the opposite of what you want: You will get weaker and smaller.

Although you can't achieve the same level of soreness all the time, I personally

consider soreness to be an indication of a successful workout.

Let's be honest, as long as you're taking care to train properly, DOMS is something that you can start to look forward to. Trust me, the better your results, the less the pain will matter to you. Eventually, you might even start to like it.

Lisa Thomas is a personal trainer/fitness coach in the Greater Springfield area, as



well as owner of Thomas Fitness Center and Fit Kidz of Massachusetts. Contact her at (413) 426-5543 or t.fitness@hotmail.com, or visit www.thomasfitnesscenter.com.

40,000 Readers • 350 locations

Western Mass
Sports Journal
Where locals become legends. THE MAGAZINE

Growing by the day!!!

**For advertisement rates, contact
Tad Tokarz (413) 301-1042**