

Boquete Health & Hospice

Magic of Music



The Magic of Music
Healing the Heart, Body & Soul

YouTube Playlists: An Explanation

By Art Blevins

What is "music wellness" and how do I try it for myself? Read on! The information below is aimed at answering those questions. I use YouTube playlists because they are accessible to all with a computer, tablet or a smartphone. What follows is based on a combination of research and recommendations from Harvard Medical School, Mayo Clinic, Johns Hopkins Medical School, AARP, and the Global Council on Brain Health (GCBH).

What is the difference between listening to music as entertainment versus listening to music for wellness? Research has shown that listening to music can reduce anxiety, blood pressure, and pain as well as improve sleep quality, mood, mental alertness, and memory. [1] Tailoring your music experience to take advantage of these benefits is exactly what music wellness is all about.

"If you want to firm up your body, head to the gym. If you want to exercise your brain, listen to music. Few things stimulate the brain the way music does," says one Johns Hopkins otolaryngologist. "If you want to keep your brain engaged throughout the aging

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process, listening to or playing music is a great tool. It provides a total brain workout.” [1]

As it turns out, those benefits may extend to your heart. "The beating of your heart and your fight-or-flight system is regulated by your brain. Once you understand that, it makes sense that listening to music that evokes a certain mood might affect the heart's function," says Dr. Andrew Budson, a lecturer in neurology at Harvard Medical School and chief of cognitive and behavioral neurology at the VA Boston Healthcare System. [5]

TRULY LISTENING

To boost music's mental-health benefits in your life, a report from the Global Council on Brain Health funded by AARP suggests “deep” or active listening — instead of putting on music as background noise. Set aside time to concentrate on what you hear, taking note of the feelings, memories, and bodily sensations that arise as you listen, whether that's a slowing of your heart rate or the urge to get up and dance. [2]

IMPROVE MOOD WITH YOUR MUSIC

If you are unhappy, listening to music can improve your mood or relieve feelings of depression. [3] Music often is linked to some of our deepest and most resilient memories and emotions. If you are feeling down, think back to music you listened to during a happier time. Often this is music from your youth. Whatever this music is, listen to it, and it may lighten the mood. [4] Enjoy listening to familiar music that comforts you and evokes positive memories and associations. [3] Research shows that music can have a beneficial effect on brain chemicals such as dopamine, which is linked to feelings of pleasure, and oxytocin, the so-called “love hormone.” [2] It is no surprise that familiar love songs are such a valuable resource for improving one's mood and memory.

NEW MUSIC

While listening to music that you know and like tends to cause the strongest brain response and dopamine release, try listening to new music. Unfamiliar melodies may stimulate your brain while providing a new source of pleasure as you get used to hearing them. [3] New music challenges the brain in a way that old music doesn't. [1] Listen to what your kids or grandkids listen to, experts at Johns Hopkins suggest. Often we continue to listen to the same songs and genre of music that we did during our teens and 20s, and we generally avoid hearing anything that's not from that era. [1]

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ENERGETIC EXERCISE MUSIC

Tuning into music's "feel good" vibes can have positive effects on several factors related to cardiovascular health. For example, listening to music before or during exercise can boost your stamina and make your workout more enjoyable, according to a review article in the February 2020 Psychological Bulletin. [5] Some research suggests that listening to music with a fast tempo (170 to 190 beats per minute, or bpm) helps keep your heart rate up and lowers your perceived exertion more than music with a tempo that's medium (130 to 150 bpm) or slow (90 to 110 bpm). But simply choosing music you enjoy to accompany your workout makes the most sense, according to a report from Harvard. [5]

PAIN MANAGEMENT

Regarding pain management, the same Harvard report also advises "Increasingly, pain medicine experts are concentrating less on fighting pain and more on distracting people from pain by focusing on other things. Music can provide that pleasant distraction." [5]

PARTICIPATE! MOVE! SING!

Based on a report by the Global Council on Brain Health, AARP also recommends that we dance, sing or move to any music. These activities not only provide physical exercise, but they can also relieve stress and they're fun ways to stimulate your brain. [3] The Mayo Clinic suggests: "Do it with a family partner in your home if you can, but alone will do, and you don't need an audience for this either. We all need to move more than we do, even in normal times. While spending more time at home these days, this is doubly true, and evidence shows that exercise also improves mental health. There are many ways — and no wrong way — to move with any kind of music. If you can find a way to hear music and move your body to it, then do it." [4]

THE PLAYLISTS

You will find a [YouTube Playlist Guide](#) at <https://boquetehealth.org/music/playlists-guide.html> to dozens of links to various music playlists on YouTube that can be used for wellness purposes. Other music streaming platforms, such as Spotify and Pandora, can also be utilized for wellness purposes. However, since YouTube currently seems to be one of the most universally available music streaming sources (and free) the attached playlist guide focuses solely on YouTube. As you try various playlists, pay attention to how you react to different forms of music, and pick the kind that works for you.

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OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the BHH Magic of Music Team tried out many of the playlists below. And here are their favorites.

- Val Strahl - Piano for Sleeping, "because it settles my mind before sleeping."
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pu86uqk3poY&list=UUJPza5nNQ5VnVHd7XhIW-OA&index=6>
- Chuck High – National Arab Orchestra
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_HoGYhk4x8
And Relaxing Flute Music <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MivG0cdqg78>
"When I listen to NAO, I see children dancing at a nightclub we visited in Damascus years ago. When I listen to flutes it reminds me of watching dancers perform in front of Angkor Wat as the sunset. Music opens many doors!"
- Sandy Dillon – Best of Instrumental Soft Rock
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrbKBvyaVts> - "I enjoy listening to soft rock instrumentals in the background throughout the day. This kind of music takes me away to happier times on a sailboat!"
- Art Blevins - 528Hz Positive Vibe (Live/Continuous)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eIUJHBqDRTQ> - "because it maintains a tranquil vibe all day long with zero commercial interruptions."

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

We invite you to peruse the YouTube playlists in the guide and find out what works best for you! We also invite your feedback! What works best for you? Please contact us at Music@boquetehospice.org

REFERENCES:

- [1] [Johns Hopkins - "Keep Your Brain Young with Music"](#)
- [2] [AARP - "Music Can Be A Great Mood Booster"](#)
- [3] [Global Council on Brain Health - "Music On Our Minds: The Rich Potential of Music to Promote Brain Health and Mental Well-Being"](#)
- [4] [Mayo Clinic - "4 Tips for Making Music Good Medicine"](#)

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[5] [Harvard Medical School - "Put a Song in Your Heart: Listening to Music May Offer a Range of Benefits for Cardiovascular Health"](#)

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