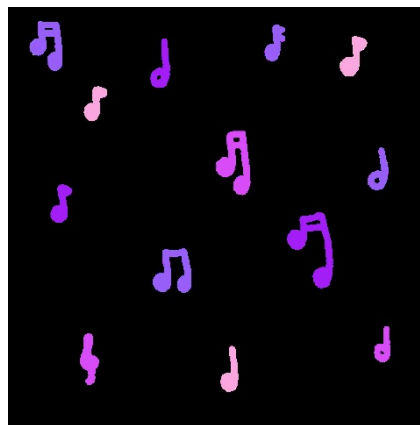




June 2021

## *The Magic of Music* Part 1



This is Part 1 of *The Magic of Music*! Listening to music is an extremely healthy hobby that everyone can enjoy in their day-to-day life.

- There are an incredible amount of health benefits to listening to music.
- Music helps us form and maintain social connections.
- Playing an instrument also has unique benefits over simply listening to songs.

After you're done reading, [don't forget to listen to our webinars every Tuesday! You can find registration links and recordings here.](#)

We are also holding Healthy Lifestyles Project: LIVE events, every Wednesday at 11 AM and Friday at 1 PM. [Register here.](#)

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## Physical & Mental Health Benefits of Music

### Improve Cognitive Performance

- Research suggests that background music, or music that is played while the listener is primarily focused on another activity, can improve performance on cognitive tasks in older adults.
- One study found that playing more upbeat music led to improvements in processing speed, while both upbeat and downbeat music led to benefits in memory.
- Consider choosing instrumental tracks rather than those with complex lyrics, which might end up being more distracting.

### Reduce Stress

- Listening to music can be an effective way to cope with stress.
- In one 2013 study, participants took part in one of three conditions before being exposed to a stressor and then taking a psychosocial stress test. Some participants listened to relaxing music, others listened to the sound of rippling water, and the rest received no auditory stimulation.
- The results suggested that listening to music had an impact on the human stress response, particularly the autonomic nervous system. Those who had listened to music tended to recover more quickly from stress.

### Feel Full Faster

- One of the most surprising psychological benefits of music is that it might be a helpful weight-loss tool. If you are trying to lose weight, listening to mellow music and dimming the lights might help you achieve your goals.
- According to one study, people who ate at low-lit restaurants where soft music was played consumed 18% less food than those who ate in other restaurants.
- The researchers suggest that music and lighting help create a more relaxed setting. Since the participants were more relaxed and comfortable, they may have consumed their food more slowly and have been more aware of when they began to feel full.

### Manage Pain

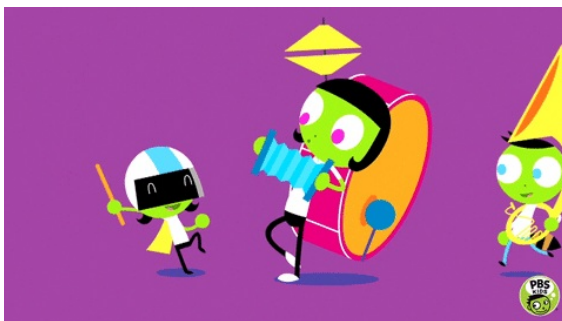
- One study of fibromyalgia patients found that those who listened to music for just one hour a day experienced a significant reduction in pain compared to those in a control group.
- At the end of the four-week study period, participants who had listened to music each day experienced significant reductions in feelings of pain and depression. Such results suggest that music therapy could be an important tool in the treatment of chronic pain.

- A 2015 review of research on the effects of music on pain management found that patients who listened to music before, during, or even after surgery experienced less pain and anxiety than those who did not listen to music.
- While listening to music at any point in time was effective, the researchers noted that listening to music pre-surgery resulted in better outcomes. The review looked at data from more than 7,000 patients and found that music listeners also required less medication to manage their pain. There was also a slightly greater, though not statistically significant, improvement in pain management results when patients were allowed to select their own music.

## Improve Endurance & Performance

- While people have a preferred pace when walking and running, scientists have discovered that the addition of a strong, rhythmic beat, such as fast-paced musical track, could inspire people to move faster.
- Runners are not only able to run faster while listening to music; they also feel more motivated to stick with it and display greater endurance. The ideal tempo for workout music is somewhere between 125 and 140 beats per minute.
- While research has found that synchronizing body movements to music can lead to better performance and increased stamina, the effect tends to be the most pronounced in cases of low to moderate intensity exercise. In other words, the average person is more likely to reap the rewards of listening to music more than a professional athlete might.
- So why does music boost workout performance? Listening to music while working out lowers a person's perception of exertion. You're working harder, but it doesn't seem like you're putting forth more effort. Because your attention is diverted by the music, you are less likely to notice the obvious signs of exertion such as increased respiration, sweating, and muscle soreness.

SOURCE: <https://www.verywellmind.com/surprising-psychological-benefits-of-music-4126866>



## Music Strengthens Bonds

### Cooperation with Others

- Performing music involves coordinating of our efforts. According to researchers, when we try to synch with others musically—keeping the beat or harmonizing, for example—we tend to feel positive social feelings towards those with whom we're synchronizing, even if that person is not visible to us or not in the same room.
- Though it's unclear exactly why that happens, coordinating movement with another person is linked to the release of pleasure chemicals (endorphins) in the brain, which may explain why we get those positive, warm feelings when we make music together.
- Playing music in a band or singing in a choir certainly involves cooperation as well—whether in preparation for the performance or during the performance.
- Arguably, cooperation increases trust between individuals and increases one's chances of future cooperation—important factors in human evolutionary success and societal stability.

### Oxytocin boost

- Oxytocin is a hormone made by the body that is known to play an important role



in increasing bonding and trust between people. Now researchers are discovering that music may affect oxytocin levels in the body.

- Singing for 30 minutes was shown to significantly raise oxytocin levels in both amateur and professional singers, regardless of how happy or unhappy the experience made them. Perhaps this explains why new mothers often sing lullabies to their newborn babies: it may help encourage bonding through oxytocin release.
- Researchers have also found that listening to music releases oxytocin. In one study, patients undergoing coronary bypass surgery were asked to listen to experimenter-selected 'soothing' music for 30 minutes one day after surgery. When tested later, those who'd listened to music had higher levels of serum oxytocin compared to those who were assigned to bed-rest alone.
- It suggests that music directly impacts oxytocin levels, which, in turn, affect our ability to trust and act generously toward others—factors that increase our social connection.

## Strengthens our Empathy

- Music has been shown to activate many areas of the brain, including the circuit that helps us to understand what others are thinking and feeling, and to predict how they might behave.
- In one study, scientists hooked up participants to an fMRI machine and had them listen to a piece of music that they were told was either composed by a human or by a computer (even though it was actually the same piece of music).
- When participants listened to music they believed was composed by a human, the areas of the brain that register empathy lit up, while it didn't under the computer condition. This suggests that our brain doesn't just process sound when we hear music, but instead tries to understand the intent of the musician and what's being communicated.
- In a more recent study, a group of primary-school-aged children were exposed to musical games with other children for one hour a week over the course of an academic year, while two control groups of same-aged children received either no games or games with the same purpose, but involving drama or storytelling instead of music.
- All of the children were given various empathy measures at the beginning and end of the year; but only the music group significantly increased their empathy scores, suggesting that music may have played a pivotal role in their empathy development.

SOURCE: [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/four\\_ways\\_music\\_strengthens\\_social\\_bonds](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/four_ways_music_strengthens_social_bonds)



## Benefits of Playing an Instrument

### Brain Health

- Playing an instrument may be one of the best ways to help keep the brain healthy.
- It engages every major part of the central nervous system, tapping into both the right and left sides of the brain.
- For example, playing the violin - which, like many instruments, requires the right hand to do something different than the left-- uses the peripheral nervous system, which controls movement of your fingers, as well as gross and fine motor skills.

- The brain's executive function - which plans and makes decisions - comes into play as a musician plays one part but keeps focus on what's coming next.
- Couple that with the total sensory input - visual, auditory, emotional and all at the same time - and it becomes a total "workout" for the brain.

## Produces Patience and Perseverance

- The process of learning to play an instrument is not always easy. It involves not only your mind but also your body. You will have to learn fingerings and/or chord shapes, develop technique, and memorize new information.
- Slowly, with consistent practice, you will find yourself getting better. With each new milestone, you gain a small reward for your efforts and this will keep you motivated. Making music requires patience. Instead of getting immediate results, you will have to persevere.

## Cultivates Creativity

- Music is a language, and the more "words" you learn the more you will be able to say.
- You will soon find yourself wanting to apply the information you've learned to create music of your own and express your own voice. Music is not just about knowing how to play specific songs, it is about expressing emotion through sound.
- Whether it is just playing your own version of a song, or creating an entirely new one, learning how to play an instrument enables you to use your creativity to say something original.

## Increases Memory Capability

- In 2003, ABC Science included a study conducted among school students, half of whom had been musically trained, and half who had not. The test involved reading a list of words to the students and asking them to recall the words after a space of time had elapsed.
- The study found that the boys who had been musically trained had a significantly better verbal memory than the boys who had not. In addition, the more musical training they had, the more words they were able to remember.

## Speeds Up Reaction Times

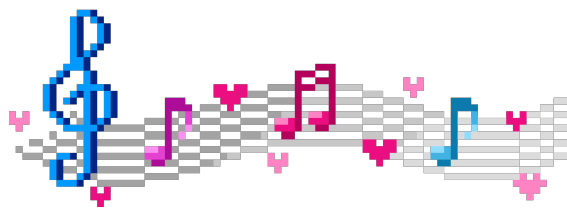
- At the Université de Montréal in Canada, Dr. Simon Landry led a study comparing the reaction times of musicians who had at least 7 years of training with non-musicians.
- Dr. Simon had the participating students place one hand on a mouse, the other on a device, and placed a speaker in front of them. If the students felt a vibration from the device, or heard a sound from the speaker, or sensed both happening at the same time, they were instructed to click the mouse.
- The results demonstrated that the musicians had significantly faster reaction times in all three ways they were stimulated.

SOURCE: <https://www.pennmedicine.org/news/news-blog/2017/january/playing-an-instrument-better-for-your-brain-than-just-listening>  
<https://pianopower.org/16-benefits-of-playing-an-instrument/>

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# Let's Stay Healthy and Listen to

# Music!



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Looking to learn more about healthy living?  
Email [NJSAP@ArcNJ.org](mailto:NJSAP@ArcNJ.org) or call **732-749-8514** to  
schedule a virtual training.

You can also visit the NJ Self-Advocacy Project  
[Training homepage](#) to submit a training request.



Don't see what you're looking for? We can create a custom training  
based on the needs and interest of your group!

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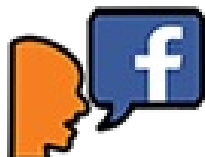
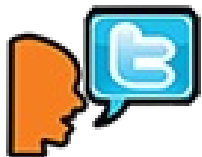
The [Healthy Lifestyles Project \(HLP\)](#) is a program of The Arc of New Jersey and receives funding through a grant awarded by [The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey](#).

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For more information on HLP and NJSAP  
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## New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project

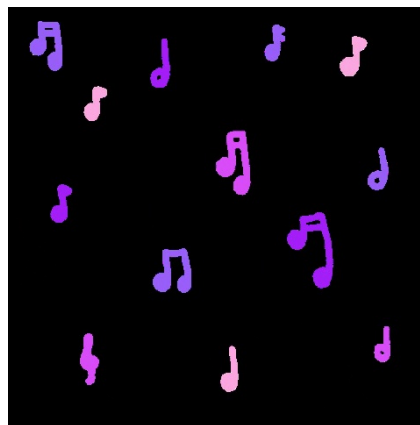
A program of The Arc of New Jersey since 1983

Promoting Advocacy and Independence for People  
with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities



June 2021

## *The Magic of Music* Part 2



This is Part 2 of *The Magic of Music*! Listening to music is an extremely healthy hobby that everyone can enjoy in their day-to-day life.

- Music therapy can help you practice mindfulness and reduce stress.
- Music can be accessed easily and affordably through various music apps in addition to physical media.
- Listen to some of our curated playlists and let us know what songs we can add!

After you're done reading, [don't forget to listen to our webinars](#)



[every Tuesday! You can find registration links and recordings here.](#)

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# Music Therapy

## What is Music Therapy?

- As a therapy, music is a proven way to reduce stress and to get into a mindful state of consciousness.
- Music therapy includes listening, communicating, and understanding. It is a popular method used in hospitals, educational institutions, and other clinical settings to ease clients and make them comfortable.
- Professor Suzanne Hanser of Berklee College of Music said that music therapy serves five significant purposes:
  - Shifting one's attention from problems to solutions.
  - Offering a rhythmic structure for relaxation and breathing.
  - Helping clients visualize positive imagery that evokes pleasure and happiness.
  - Helping them achieve a deep state of relaxation.
  - Changing mood.

## Group Activity: “Draw What You Hear”

- Goals: To increase creative expression; self-awareness; communication skills
- Activity:
  1. Listen to 6 different instrumental songs of varying styles and sounds, each for approximately 3 minutes.
  2. Draw, write, or journal things that you hear within the music using one rectangle for each song.
- Suggestions: Consider choosing instrumental songs that are mainstream enough to capture your attention, but are not distracting or overly familiar. Some suggestions include score music from Disney Pixar movies and other familiar orchestral works like Gershwin's “Rhapsody in Blue”, Copland's “Fanfare for the Common Man” and the like.
- Takeaway: Share what you came up with and discuss with the group. Have a conversation about how we each hear and perceive the same information differently. Discuss your listening skills and what you could do to be a stronger listener.

## Group Activity: “Hand in My Pocket”

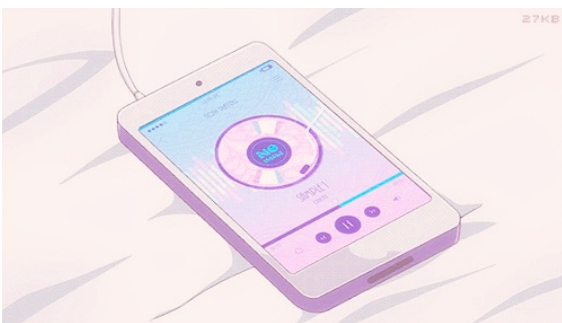
- Goals: To increase self-awareness, emotional expression, autonomy, self-esteem.
- Activity:
  1. This intervention relies heavily on a crowd-favorite, “Hand in My Pocket” by Alanis Morissette. Begin this session by asking participants to think of things they consider to be “in their control” and “out of their control”.
  2. Give everyone a piece of paper with the shape of a blank hand.
  3. List the things that are in your control inside the hand, and things that are

- outside of your control outside of the hand.
4. Brainstorm a group version of this list and write it down on a whiteboard.
  5. The lyrics of the song, “Hand in My Pocket”, includes themes of acceptance, moving forward, change, and control. Give patients a lyric substitution worksheet and encourage them to think of their own version of a verse of the song, asking them to first identify something that is out of their control, and then something that is in their control as their way to cope.
  6. “I’m broke but I’m happy” might be re-written as “I’m hurt but I’m coping”. Be sure to stress that they write the challenge first and then the way in which they’re coping with that challenge (“I’m broke but I’m loved”). [Here is an example of a group's substitutions.](#)
- Takeaway: Patients leave with a sense of self-worth and are often extremely proud of the group collaboration on their lyric substitution. It also challenges them to consider things that are within their control and aspects of their life they have the ability to change.

## Lyric Substitution Sheet



SOURCE: <https://www.education.com/magazine/article/music-therapy-techniques-home/>  
<https://musictherapytime.com/2016/07/11/mental-health-session-ideas-2/>



## Music Apps

### Music Apps

- You can always listen to physical media such as records, cassettes, and CDs, but these days most people are switching to digital means to listen to their favorite tunes.
- There are many free and paid apps that can be used to listen to music.
- It mainly comes down to personal preference what you might like to use!

### Spotify

- Spotify has the best music discovery algorithms and the best user interface.
- It helps you to find new artists and old favorites, based on what you've already liked and listened to on the app.
- The free tier, with advertisements, defaults to a low-quality streaming
- For \$10 a month, the Premium tier ditches ads entirely and streams up to 320 Kbps, which is the standard streaming quality these days.



- If you turn on social sharing, you can see what your friends have been listening to and create sessions where a group simultaneously streams a playlist.

## Apple Music

- Apple Music also will create playlists and help find new music, but it's often not as helpful as Spotify.
- Like Spotify, you can see what your friends are listening to if they've turned on social sharing.
- There's also a tab showing all your favorited songs, artist by artist, so if you want to listen to AC/DC on your drive home, it'll play all the AC/DC songs you've liked across all their albums.
- There are no free tier, just one plan for \$10 a month that streams up to 256 Kbps, which isn't noticeably different from Spotify's 320 Kbps.
- You're limited to 100,000 songs in your library, but there are no limits to how many you can put in each playlist.

## Tidal

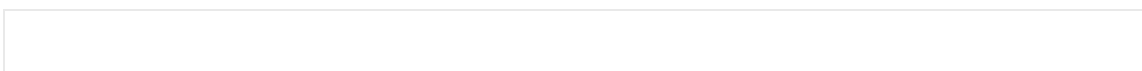
- Tidal started out leaning heavily on hip-hop, but that's not the case these days. Its catalog of more than 70 million songs draws from the same broad swathe of genres as its competition.
- There are three pricing tiers. Tidal Access is free and lets you play curated channels, but you can't search for music or skip songs. The Premium tier is \$10 a month and plays audio at up to 320 Kbps.
- The real draw is the HiFi tier for \$20 a month. It plays everything at lossless sound quality, up to 1,411 Kbps. There are tracks you can play at "Master" quality (up to 9,216 Kbps), but they're few and far between. It supports Dolby Atmos Music and 360 Reality Audio too.
- Most people don't have the ears or equipment to discern lossless audio quality and will do fine without it, but if you do have the right gear, Tidal will provide the absolute best in audio quality.

## YouTube Music

- YouTube Music's interface is slick and well laid-out. The song queue and lyrics pop up in a vertical window within the app, which makes navigating quicker and easier. You can also easily switch from listening to a song to watching the music video (if one is available).
- The service has more than 60 million songs in its catalog, and its suggestions are pretty good.
- You can keep 100,000 songs saved in your library, and you can create and share playlists with your buddies.
- YouTube Music combines Apple Music's and Spotify's best artist-tracking features: You can see your "liked" songs by artist, and you can subscribe to an artist to see their entire catalog and new releases.
- The free tier has a major downside—on the smartphone app, the music stops playing when you turn your screen off or jump to another app.
- The only way to get around this is to pay up for YouTube Music Premium (\$10 a month), which also cuts out the ads and lets you download songs for offline playback.
- The desktop app doesn't have this issue, so you can use that for free easily if you don't mind ads.
- Note: If you watch a lot of YouTube, it's worth paying for YouTube Premium instead for \$12 per month. It gets rid of ads on YouTube and offers up unlimited access to YouTube Music Premium.

## **Meditation and Calming Sounds**

- If you are looking for an app with relaxing sounds or guided meditation, try checking out the website below.







## These 7 Apps Will Deepen Your Meditation Practice

Our editors independently research, test, and recommend the best products; you can learn more about our review process here. We may receive commissions on purchases made from our chosen links. The 7 Best Meditation Apps of 2021 What are you...

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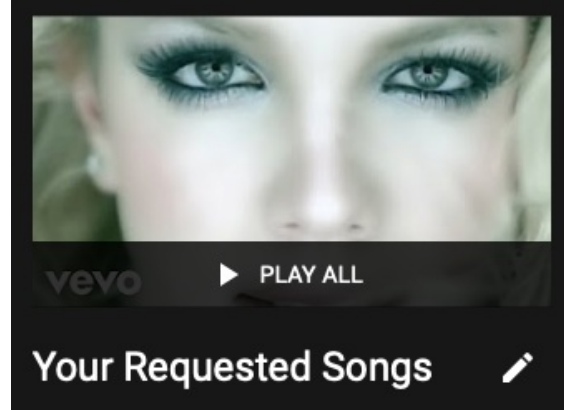
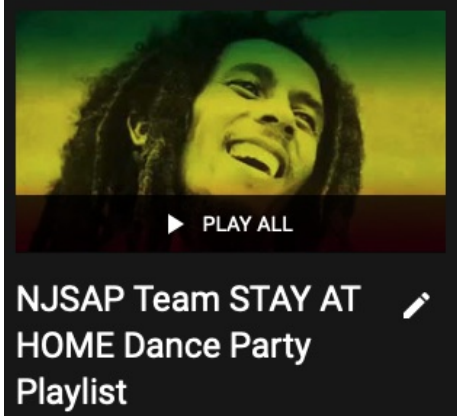
[www.verywellmind.com](http://www.verywellmind.com)

SOURCE: <https://www.wired.com/gallery/best-music-streaming-apps/>  
<https://www.verywellmind.com/best-meditation-apps-4767322>



## Requests & Playlists

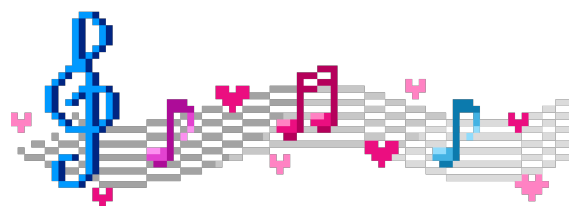
Check out our curated Youtube Playlists and Talent Show videos for some ideas on what to listen to! You can also fill out our Song Survey and let us know what you like and we'll add it to our Requested Songs Playlist!



**Submit a  
Song**

Source: [www.arcnj.org/programs/njsap/videos.html](http://www.arcnj.org/programs/njsap/videos.html)

**Let's Stay  
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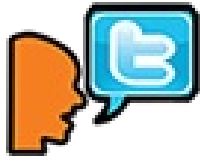
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