

Four Ways Listening to Music May Support Mental Health

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People everywhere listen to music. It surrounds us daily, whether it's at the store, in the car, at a workout class, or at a concert. Music can make people feel good, and research suggests it can also help improve mental health. Music may influence emotions, attitudes, and even some physical responses (Zaatar et al., 2023).

Creating music, such as playing an instrument, tapping out a rhythm, or singing, can support mental health as well. However, simply listening to music can be a more accessible way to support your well-being. Music affects people differently depending on personal preference, memories, culture, volume, environment, and emotional state. Many kinds of music may support emotional well-being, particularly when listeners choose music that fits their needs and circumstances.

Below are four ways listening to music may support your mental health.

1. Improves Mood

Listening to music can help relieve sadness and bring a listener into a more positive emotional state (Wang et al., 2025). It can also improve mood and enhance well-

being. Music can serve as a way to process emotions. For example, listening to a familiar song may remind you of good times, an upbeat song may lift your mood, or a sad song may help you process emotions when it reflects how you are feeling (Ferguson & Sheldon, 2012).

1. Builds Connection

Music can be a great way to connect with others and bring people together. Social interaction and a sense of community can support mental health, and music can play an important role in creating those experiences. Music can help people connect without words or typical social interaction (Greenberg et al., 2021). Hymns, folk music, national anthems, and school spirit songs can unite people around shared identities, values, and experiences, strengthening communities and creating a sense of belonging and shared experiences. Love songs can also help create connections between individuals by allowing them to connect emotionally and strengthen relationships (Nguyen et al., 2023).

1. Improves Focus

Songs without lyrics, such as classical or instrumental music, or music specifically designed for focus and studying, may provide an extra boost to focus and concentration (Souza & Barbosa, 2023). This type of music can help the brain to focus and stay on task rather than become distracted. Choose instrumental music with a steady, moderate tempo and avoid turning it up loud enough to distract you. For some listeners, this can create a consistent study environment, reduce distractions, and help keep the mind on task.

4. Manages Stress

Music can help manage stress for both your mind and your body. A 2025 scoping review of sound interventions found evidence of effects on the mental stress response, including reductions in blood pressure and heart rate (Saskovets et al., 2025). Similar to how music can help people feel happier after feeling sad, it may help people feel calmer, allowing them to navigate stressful feelings and situations with greater ease (Linnemann et al., 2015).

No matter your preferred genre or setting of how and when you listen to music, it can be a great mechanism for supporting mental health. Music may be more than just enjoyable and entertaining; it can be a meaningful way to support well-being, manage stress and sadness, focus, and build connection. Because music affects people differently, consider choosing music intentionally for a specific purpose. For example, calming down, lifting your

mood, concentrating, or connecting with someone while noticing how you feel before and after listening. Music can be a valuable addition to a personal well-being routine, but it should not replace professional support when you are experiencing persistent or serious mental health concerns. Start with one song today and check out our resources below.

Additional Resources

- Healthline: The Benefits of Listening to Music: <https://www.healthline.com/health/benefits-of-music>
- Headspace: Trigger Focus and Productivity Using Music: https://youtu.be/sY_VMjVqIj0?si=GM5GJgo2uqJtceWE

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