

Oh My Aching Head! Can Music Really Make You Feel Better?

We all know, if only instinctively, that music has a profound effect on us. If we didn't believe that music affects us then singing lullabies to calm children and help them sleep wouldn't be universal.

In reality melody, harmony, and rhythm probably impacts the human brain in ways that are far more profound than we realize. We all know that an up tempo melody from our favorite performer stirs and energizes us just as a slower melody can help us relax or even prompt sad emotions from the depths of our soul, but did you know that evidence has been found linking the merging of melody, harmony, and rhythm with pain management?

The direct implication of this is that by incorporating the right melody (we'll discuss what defines the right melody in a moment) into your schedule it is possible to reduce your need for pain medication and thereby save money and aggravation.

Sound good? I know it does to me. Who wouldn't like to save a little more money that they are already sending to the pharmaceutical companies. And the best part is that the melodies that you need for pain management may already be in your collection.

Researchers suggest that the magic melody that you are looking for in your quest for melodic pain relief isn't one particular song that fits all. Instead personal taste is an important factor: but don't run out and put on your favorite hard rock selection, it probably won't do the trick. Instead, you want to look for a gentle, soothing melody that helps you relax. This might mean an old Natalie Cole melody that distracts you and draws you in to a more comfortable moment, but whether your taste is for Natalie Cole, Handel, or something more modern, the key is to find a melody that has a slow steady beat (ideally at or under sixty beats per minute, which is just below the resting rate of the human heart) that will help you relax and let the pain medication do its work more effectively.

Once you have found the right melody, sit back and focus on the melody for at least fifteen minutes. If you can do this, it can have the effect of lowering your heart rate and breathing rate thereby releasing the tension that comes with (or in some cases even causes) the pain. If you find it difficult to focus on giving the melody your undivided attention, try prefacing your selections with an additional melody that picks you up emotionally and sucks you into the moment before going into your quieting music which should relax you; after all, relaxing you is the primary function of many analgesics anyway so why not do it with a melody that's already in your collection? Or better yet, what better excuse to go out and add a new CD to your collection?

And hey -- even if it doesn't help your aching head, its a heck of a lot cheaper than other means and pleasant to boot!

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