

MUSIC IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEART AND SOUL

by: Ed Lettner of The Music Studio



Since the days of ancient Greece and Rome, music has been recognized for its contributions to the emotional, mental and physical well-being of people. Traditional Chinese medicine also refers to the positive effects of specific instruments and musical sounds on various organs of the body.

Today, music therapy is a growing field in health care, as the benefits of music are being used to manage pain, calm patients, promote movement and ease muscle tension. Music is also proving helpful in the treatment of patients with cancer, depression and anxiety, as well as children with

ADD. It also helps put a bounce in your step each day.

Music with a strong beat stimulates brainwaves. Faster beats improve concentration and alertness while slower tempos promote a feeling of calm. From this, your brain learns how to regulate your brainwave activity as needed. This encourages a positive state of mind, which helps people cope with depression and anxiety and contributes to one's level of optimism.

Research has shown that music played at approximately 60 beats per minute stimulates our alpha brainwaves, thus promoting relaxed concentration which, consequently, leads to improved learning. This research is known as The Mozart Effect because the music of Mozart, Bach and Brahms produced the best test results.

These positive changes to your brainwaves also have a beneficial effect on your breathing and heart rates. Music can help to slow both down, which activates the body's relaxation response and, in turn, allows one to cope with chronic stress. Music also helps the body by lowering blood pressure, boosting the immune system and easing muscle tension.

Here are some ways to make music part of your day:

- Start your day by listening to upbeat music.
- Listen to music while on your way to work or school.
- Listen to music while doing housework.
- Listen to relaxing music while eating to reduce stress, which, in turn, aids digestion.
- Soothing music can help you get to sleep.

As the poet William Wordsworth once wrote, "The music in my heart I bore. Long after it was heard no more."

Ed Lettner owns The Music Studio in Etobicoke which has offered music instruction since 1990. He is an honours graduate of the Humber College Institute of Technology music program. Ed believes in the benefits of music for your heart and soul. So let Hoagy Carmichael or Huey Lewis and The News inject a little Heart and Soul into your heart and soul. For information about the programs at The Music Studio, please call 416-234-9268, email ed@themusicstudio.ca or visit www.themusicstudio.ca