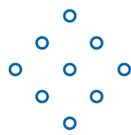


The health benefits of music

Singing and playing a musical instrument can make us feel a lot better. Explore how you can improve your wellbeing through music.

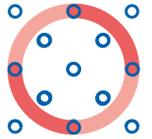
Music has many health benefits and there is an increasing amount of research which supports this. As well as relaxing to music by engaging in things such as meditation, many are now choosing to join a choir as a way of relaxing, expressing and connecting with others through a shared interest. Joining a choir can reduce isolation through this face-to-face connection with others.

We live in a world where we are 'online' and 'connected' most of the day, yet ironically many report feeling more isolated and lonely than ever due to none of these connections being face-to-face. 93% of communication takes place non-verbally so our 'e-connections' only really communicate 7% of our message.

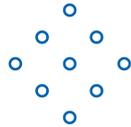


Singing

Singing is also a valuable form of exercise, which in turn can benefit mental health. When we sing, we breathe. Sounds obvious, right? However, through singing, we regulate our breathing as we breath in and out with the phrase of the music that we are singing.



As we take oxygen into our bodies, 'feel-good' hormones are released into our blood stream. oxygenating the blood improves both our mood and energy levels. Singing also helps us to maintain good body posture and alignment, as we naturally do not sing slouched, yet many of us spend a lot of our lives slouched over screens.



Playing an instrument

Playing an instrument also has many of these benefits and can be equally beneficial for our physical and emotional wellbeing. As well as the reasons above, it can also instil a wonderful sense of achievement in us, as of course singing can too. Research in neuroscience has found that both playing an instrument and singing cause both sides of the brain to be stimulated as all neural pathways are engaged.

Music can enhance and simulate memories and words, making it an effective way to engage those who find it difficult to communicate verbally for any reason. It can relieve stress, lower heart rate and blood pressure and therefore decrease our stress levels and improve our overall wellbeing. Both singing and playing an instrument can also increase confidence, help us develop patience as we work hard to learn an instrument or learn words of a song, but above all, it should be something we do for fun and enjoyment. Try googling 'playing an instrument' and see what google suggests.

Written by Ray Travasso and Anita Thomas

Ray Travasso is a qualified Music Therapist and Director of Suffolk Music therapy Services. Anita Thomas is a Senior Music Therapist and Supervisor at Suffolk Music Therapy Services.

ray@suffolkmusictherapyservices.co.uk
<http://www.suffolkmusictherapyservices.co.uk>

