

5. Music

I don't know about you, but my favorite musical genres seem to switch every five business days. There is so much to discover, and it's a shame to know that we will most likely never exhaust all the files uploaded on streaming platforms such as Spotify. Or maybe, it's a blessing; the incredible production and distribution rates in music can be an incentive to keep trying out new melodies and artists. Today, I will summarize for you why immersing yourself in music can also positively impact your mental health.

[intro sound]

Music is often repetitive and rhythmic. This prominent trait engages a brain region called the neocortex, which soothes us by preventing excessive impulsivity. The neocortex may also differentiate and operate differently with different frequencies, resonances, and so on. When we are feeling down, we might prefer sad songs over happy party anthems. Contrary to common belief, matching your music to your mood, which includes the negative, can help the body process big emotions that the brain suppresses either consciously or subconsciously. While it isn't necessarily beneficial to stick to only heavy ballads forever, emphasizing with a relatable genre or artist for a while to help organize your thoughts can bring a lot of clarity into your life.

This in turn reduces stress because you can move on from a clean slate. According to verywellmind.com, "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 following a stressor." You can be certain that any musical genre, not just atmospheric yoga tracks, can improve your mental well-being in one way or another. It is very important to try new directions sometimes, as classical music is likely to have other effects on you than hard rock metal (though both may be positive). Usually, our bodies tell us what we want to hear through memory or pattern recognition when hearing other similar songs. Our brains know how to make use of resources available, especially music; we just need to listen to them.

Indeed, listening, making, and writing music has manifold benefits for our mental health, among them memory and general cognitive performance and endurance improvement, dietary relief, longer and deeper sleep, permanent mood improvements, and both mental and physical pain management. Of course, music cannot be compared to professional medicine for serious illnesses, but it can be seen as a very effective supplement. This is why music therapy, drawing on lyric analysis, songwriting, active listening, and communal playing of instruments, has long been an established method in psychiatric hospitals and other institutions all around the world. For you, the therapeutic nature of nature could start on your next run or shower.

By the way, listening to people like me talk on podcasts such as the silver--lining has also been scientifically proven to be beneficial in the same regards, apart from educating you about

science and society. I hope you could sort of feel this listening to me so far. I will continue to put in hard work into this project to find more ways to uplift everybody during both easy and hard times!

So, stay tuned for the next episode! Until then, trust your silver--lining.

[outro sound]