



The Power of Music as a Stress Reliever

Music can affect the body in many health-promoting ways, which is the basis for a growing field known as music therapy. However, you can use music in your daily life and achieve many stress relief benefits on your own. One of the great benefits of music as a stress reliever is that it can be used while you conduct your regular activities so that it doesn't take time away from your busy schedule. Music provides a wonderful backdrop for your life so that you can find increased enjoyment from what you're doing and also reduce stress from your day. The following are some of the ways you can use music to enhance your regular activities.



Getting Ready in the Morning:

- You can wake yourself up with music, and start your day feeling great, setting the tone for a lower-stress day. Trying listening to music in the shower or even just playing the radio on low in the background while you make breakfast, brush your teeth, or get dressed.

During a Commute:

- If you drive to work, put an end to the stress of traffic and that rush to work feeling by playing your favorite music in the car. If you have an auxiliary input, you can even plug your ipod or mp3 player into your car and listen to your favorite songs. Consider creating an "On the Way to Work" playlist on your mp3 player and making it a habit of updating the list frequently to keep the music fresh and interesting.
- It can relieve some of the tension you feel from the commute itself and the day so far, and help you feel less like you're wasting time in traffic, and more like you're having some nice time to yourself. It can also take your mind off of all that you need to get done once you reach your destina-

tion, so you'll arrive less stressed and more prepared to take on what awaits you.

Cooking:

- Good nutrition is an important part of a healthy lifestyle, and it can actually keep your stress level down. Eating at home is a great way to ensure healthy and less expensive meals, but many people find themselves too tired to cook once they get home. If you put on some smooth jazz or other genre of music that you enjoy, cooking becomes a fun activity rather than a chore, and you'll likely find yourself relaxed and in a better frame of mind once dinner starts, which can enable you to savor your dinner and your company as you eat.

While Eating:

- As you're eating your meal, music can also be a great compliment. Soothing music can trigger the relaxation response, which can lower cortisol levels, making it easier to digest food. If you need a genre suggestion, studies have shown that classical music in particular can help you eat less, digest better, and enjoy your food more.

For more information about stress relief, contact the work/life experts at BalanceWorks® by calling:

1.800.EAP.CALL
(1.800.327.2255)

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Cleaning:

- Keeping a simple, organized home can really help to cut down on your stress level, but cleaning itself is a chore that many busy people don't have the energy to contribute after a long day. However, if you throw on some energetic music, hip-hop or pop, for example, you can raise your energy level and have fun as you clean. If you tell yourself that you only need to clean for a certain amount of songs and then you can be done, you may work more efficiently, and even come to look forward to doing the job.

When Paying Bills:

- We all need to pay bills, but the job doesn't always take a high degree of concentration. Playing music while you write your checks can help take your mind off of financial stress you may be feeling, and make the task more enjoyable.

Before Bed:

- Getting enough sleep is important for proper functioning, and getting enough sleep can help you handle stress better. Unfortunately, stress can also interfere with sleep in several ways. Playing music as you drift off is one way to counteract the effects of stress by taking your mind off of what's stressing you, slowing down your breathing, and soothing your mind. Keep in mind, slow tempo or calming instrumental songs are the best for dozing off, you don't want to play anything up beat with a lot of variation in pitch and sound because it may keep the mind active and awake.

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