

In A Nutshell
July 2018
Music & MS

A number of studies have shown that music can have therapeutic benefits for people with multiple sclerosis by easing symptoms of depression and anxiety and bolstering coping skills. What is unique about music is its ability to engage different parts of the brain, including the areas involved in emotion, cognition (thinking and planning), and motivation

“Rehabilitative” therapy uses music to stimulate brain function to improve certain areas of functioning. The simplest approach of all is music listening, which people can do on their own as a way of coping with stress, depression or anxiety. No specific genre of music has been shown to be more therapeutic, so the choice of what to listen to is left to personal preference.

Body movements that we use during the day are essential to keeping us active and independent. Adding repeated movements together with a melodic sound can improve coordination and concentration. Doing these repetitive actions can also affect endurance, and help create a more level walking gait.

Music activates movement, so that the thinking process is bypassed. It is a free action which eliminates overwhelming cognitive upheaval.

Another benefit of music is improved memory, which would be incredibly helpful to those experiencing memory loss. Even though we find it difficult to remember daily tasks, we still retain the ability to be taught and perform physical activities, such as playing musical instruments. These activities help to improve cognitive abilities.

Anxiety, depression and stress also can receive high benefits from listening to or performing music. It can help you to relax the mind and to deal with emotions you may have concerning your illness or life in general. Also beneficial are music therapy group sessions, since music activates emotions and social connections in the brain.

Singing can also help with the breath support, pronunciation, and timing needed for speech.

<https://multiplesclerosisnewstoday.com/2017/02/27/the-benefits-of-music-therapy-for-ms/>
<http://msology.ca/music-therapy-for-multiple-sclerosis>

Just For Fun

When I am outside I travel by scooter. As an example, it takes me about 30 minutes to get from my house to Lake Miona Rec Center. Some other locations take longer. So, I rely on music to accompany me on these journeys. I can't carry a tune. But I love to sign along to the music on my phone as I go from point A to point B.

I am sure that we all have certain albums, artists or songs that we love. My suggestion to you is to create a playlist of these tunes. Take 15-20 minutes a day to just quietly listen or, if you are able, get up and move around to the beat.

Recently a friend sent me a link to a website that offered a very inspiring rendition of *Amazing Grace*. It included an introduction into the background of this song. I suggest that you take a few minutes to listen to this. And I challenge you not to be inspired. It will take you away from the challenges you are facing.

<http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=1312>

