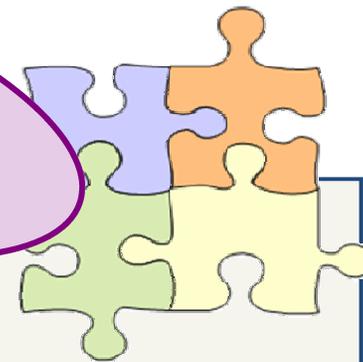


# Fitness Puzzle

Week 6



*Where can you put more music in your life? Better yet, substitute TV time for music and watch how much you get done and how your mood elevates.*

## Managing Pain

One way to manage pain is by diverting your attention elsewhere—and music can be a pleasant diversion. It has been used to help manage the pain associated with surgery, physical rehab, childbirth, cancer, burn treatment, and other conditions. In a [study from the University of Utah Pain Research Center](#), healthy volunteers were asked to listen to music, follow the melodies, and pick out sour notes. At the same time, they were given safe but uncomfortable shocks with fingertip electrodes. As the demands of the music task increased, their pain decreased. And people who were most anxious about pain got the most benefit. The researchers noted that anxiety-prone people tend to be easily absorbed in their thoughts, so anxious volunteers may have been more caught up in the music.

## Reducing Stress

Music can calm your mind as it soothes your soul. In a [study from Tzu Chi University](#) in Taiwan, new nurses with high stress levels were randomly assigned to either listen to slow, soothing music or simply rest quietly. Those in the music group reported feeling less stressed, and they also had lower blood pressure, heart rate, and stress hormone levels.

## Boosting Immune Health

Some studies have suggested that music may give your immune system a boost. And it doesn't only affect humans. Mice are susceptible as well. In a [study published in the Journal of Cardiothoracic Surgery](#), Japanese researchers played music for mice which had undergone heart transplants. Opera music by Verdi and classical music by Mozart reduced rejection of the heart transplants, but single-frequency monotonous and new age music by Enya did not. (Draw your own conclusions, music critics.). The benefits seemed to be due to music's influence on the immune system. Among other changes, mice exposed to opera had increased numbers of certain cells that regulate peripheral immune function.

## Encouraging Exercise

Music at the gym or on a run can motivate you to work out longer and harder. In research presented at the 2012 meeting of the British Psychological Society, music psychologist Alexandra Lamont found that competitive athletes felt more in the zone when they listened to their favorite music during workouts. They also reported lower levels of perceived exertion.

## Promoting Sleep

Mom had the right idea when she sang you a lullaby. One common use of music is to promote sedation and sleep. And it seems to really help, even for people with chronic insomnia and those who have undergone stressful medical procedures. Among other effects, soothing [music at bedtime may prolong REM sleep](#), the stage during which dreaming occurs.

