

Feel Better with Music

You might call music solace on the air waves. Dentists play music to reduce their patients' anxiety. Hospitals pipe tunes into delivery rooms. And supermarkets broadcast music to keep shoppers rolling along. And the right kind of music can soothe your nerves. Soft, slow, low-pitched music lowers heart rate and blood pressure and relaxes muscles, while loud, fast, high-pitched music creates tension.

Consequently, soothing music is now used to reduce anxiety and pain associated with medical procedures and other unpleasantness. Here's how to put soothing music to work for you.

1. •Do relax, select music that has a regular rhythm with no extremes in pitch. Bach's "Air on the G String," Pachelbel's "Canon in D," Haydn's "Cello Concerto in C," and Debussy's "Claire de Lune" are good examples.
2. •To pull yourself out of a glum mood, listen to music that's snappy and upbeat.
3. •To quiet a crying baby, play soft music with a tempo that's the same as the human heart rate (70 to 80 beats per minute).
4. •To increase work productivity, turn on an easy listening radio station. The music format is usually geared to the changes in mood people routinely experience in the course of the day: Bright and cheery music to get going in the morning, stimulating tunes during the pre-lunch slump, and relaxing music to wind down at day's end.