

Music Medicine: Wellness and Self Care for Caregivers by Kristi Phillips, MT-BC, HPC

“The Weight” by The Band

[Verse 1]

I pulled in to Nazareth
Was feeling ‘bout half past dead
I just need some place
Where I can lay my head
“Hey, mister, can you tell me
Where a man might find a bed?”
He just grinned and shook my hand, “no”
was all he said.

[Chorus]

**Take a load off Fanny
Take a load for free
Take a load off Fanny
A... And, You put the load right on me.**

[Verse 2]

I picked up my bag
I went looking for a place to hide
When I saw Carmen and the Devil walkin’
side by side
I said “Hey Carmen, come on
Let’s go downtown?”
And she said, “I gotta go
But my friend can stick around”

[Chorus]

[Verse 3]

Go down, Miss Moses, there’s nothin’ you
can say
It’s just ol’ Luke, and Luke’s waitin’ on the
Judgement Day
“Well, Luke, my friend, what about young
Anna Lee?”
He said, “Do me a favor, son, won’t ya stay
and keep Anna Lee company?”

[Chorus]

[Verse 4]

Crazy Chester followed me, and he caught
me in the fog
He said, “I will fix your rack, if you’ll take
Jack, my dog.”
I said, “Wait a minute, Chester, you know
I’m a peaceful man.”
He said, “That’s okay, boy, won’t you feed
him when you can.”

[Chorus]

[Verse 5]

Catch a Cannonball, now, to take me down
the line
My bag is sinkin’ low and I do believe it’s
time
To get back to Miss Fanny, you know she’s
the only one
Who sent me here with her regards for
everyone

“You Are Musical” Creed

The ability to be musical comes from within.

You don't have to play an instrument,

You already are an instrument.

Music is everyone's birthright.

As a child, you explored the world of sound and rhythm.

There is a musical spirit waiting to be discovered in you.

Music is not reserved for the stage.

It can be an everyday event in everyday places.

It is heard in your heartbeat, your breath, your words,

And shared in community, ceremony, prayer, and fun.

There is a reason we say we play music.

Music is about creativity, playfulness, and expression.

Even if you've been silenced and excluded from music making,

You are still yearning for music in your life.

You can create harmony in your life

And connect with the musical spirit that allows your soul to sing.

Dr. Barry Bittman's research "Playing a musical instrument releases stress on the genomic level"

https://usa.yamaha.com/news_events/2005/20050204_playing-a-musical-instrument-reverses-stress-on-the-genomic-level_us.html

BUENA PARK, CA (February 4, 2005) — A groundbreaking [study](#) published in the February 2005 issue of the international research journal [Medical Science Monitor](#) shows for the first time that playing a musical instrument can reverse multiple components of the human stress response on the genomic level. The study's principal investigator, [Barry Bittman, M.D.](#) of the Mind-Body Wellness Center in Meadville, PA, says these unique findings not only shed new light on the value of active music participation, but also extend our understanding of individualized human biological stress responses on an unprecedented level.



Barry Bittman, M.D.

The research team led by Bittman included researchers from Loma Linda University School of Medicine and Applied Biosystems, the developer of the original technology that led to the successful mapping of the human genome announced in June, 2000.

During the first hour of the novel two-phase study, researchers employed a frustrating puzzle assembly exercise to induce stress in 32 adult volunteers who did not consider themselves "musical." In the second hour, subjects were randomly divided into three groups. One subset of individuals continued the stressful activity, while another was allowed to de-stress, relax and read newspapers or magazines of their choice.

The third group participated in their first group-based recreational music making keyboard program – Yamaha's Clavinova Connection – which focuses on nurturing, support and non-verbal creative expression, as opposed to mastery and performance.

Before and after each phase, the researchers sampled subjects' blood for 45 known genomic markers or molecular switches that literally "turn on" biological responses closely associated with health challenges that range from heart disease to cancer, and from diabetes to inflammatory diseases.

Instead of manifesting a common biological reaction to the stress-induction experience, responses differed considerably from person to person. Dr. Bittman said, "While we were challenged at first by such a wide range of responses, closer examination of the data revealed what we eventually termed *individualized genomic stress induction signatures*. We were actually measuring biological diversity in action."

These results shed light on how people exposed to precisely the same stressor react biologically and psychologically in their own unique ways. A combination of factors including one's health, genetics, conditioning and a host of situational and psychosocial variables ultimately determines each individual's distinctive stress responses. While the precise biological links between stress and disease remain elusive, it isn't surprising that under the same chronic stressful conditions, one person might experience a heart attack while another may develop high blood pressure.

Yet beyond stress-induction, the research shows that the stress-reduction impact was far greater for individuals participating in their first group keyboard lesson than for subjects who simply relaxed and read newspapers and magazines. No statistically significant reversals of initial stress-induced gene expression were noted in individuals who continued the puzzle exercise during the second hour. In contrast, six genes in the relaxation group reversed during phase two of the study, compared with 19 genes in the music group.

Bittman added, "Our preliminary findings demonstrate that active participation in a group keyboard program was far more effective at reversing *stress signatures* than simply relaxing and reading newspapers and magazines. This is intriguing from an integrative lifestyle perspective. One possible explanation relates to the degree of active engagement in a calming expressive activity in contrast to merely settling down to relax and read. With ongoing research, recreational music making could potentially serve as a rational stress reduction activity along with other lifestyle strategies that include healthy nutrition and exercise."

"In simple terms, using a unique combination of the latest genomic technologies, we showed for the very first time that we could turn off the DNA-based switches that literally turn on components of human stress response," said Muhammad A. Sharaf, Ph.D., Senior Staff Scientist at Applied Biosystems. "The far-reaching potential of inducing and subsequently reversing gene expression in this manner introduces new and exciting possibilities for testing and tailoring specific treatments to an individual, rather than a group.

"From a stress research perspective, this study introduces a dynamic genomic framework for more fully understanding the complex biological impact and potential health benefits of playing a musical instrument," commented George Stefano, Ph.D., Director, Neuroscience Research Institute – State University of New York (SUNY) and Vice Chair, Board of Directors – Research Foundation of SUNY. "The study's innovative technological approach holds great promise for the future development and testing of health strategies geared specifically to the individual. Furthermore, it adds considerable insight into earlier studies demonstrating positive health outcomes that come from listening to music."

In the context of current stress assessment methods including self-reported surveys, the researchers recognize that the utilization of a person's *stress signature* for personalizing a host of healthcare interventions sounds like a futuristic endeavor. They suggest this study represents a mere glimpse of the potential that exists today for scientists to improve quality of life by better understanding the complexity of the human stress response.

The study was supported by Yamaha Corporation of America and Applied Biosystems.
For more info email infostation@yamaha.com.

Finding your Heart Song

Your Heart Song is something that sings the words your heart needs to say. IT speaks the words you haven't been able to express. You'll know when you find it. It speaks to your very heart and soul.

Find songs that do this for you; download them, listen to them, but most importantly sing along with them. It's when you sing and make music with your own instrument, your body- that the healing benefits of music come. It would be best for you to find your own songs, However, here is a small list of a variety of genres below to get you started.

List of Songs that Validate the stress you feel, brought on by caregiving

"Fragile" Sting

"Sunshine on My Shoulders" John Denver

"Be Still My Soul" Mormon Tabernacle Choir

"It's Not Something You Get Over Just Something You Get Through" Willie Nelson

"Better Than a Hallelujah" Mercy River

"Carry That Weight" or "I'm So Tired" The Beatles

"Blowin' in the Wind" Bob Dylan

"We Shall Overcome" and "How Can I Keep From Singing" Bruce Springsteen

List of Songs to remember why I am caregiving

"Hello in There", John Prine

"Because of You" Tony Bennett

"Unforgettable" Nat King Cole

"The Prayer" Josh Groban and Charlotte Church

"When You Say Nothing All" Allison Krauss

“All I Ask of You” Andrew Lloyd Webber

“Memories of You” Kate Laurel Smith

“You Needed Me” Anne Murray

Music Prescriptions *Just for Fun*

Recommendations by Elizabeth Miles

Miles, E. (2000). “Music to spark creativity, soothe the soul, energize spirit, change moods, too”. [Bottom Line Personal](#). December 15, Vol.21 #24.

“When you listen to music, your inner ear converts sound waves into electrical impulses that travel throughout your body. Music alters brain wave activity, state of mind- even heart rate and blood pressure. Some songs can put you to sleep... some can make you cry...others can calm you down. Once you’ve found the songs that hit their target, use them to change your state of mind and body.”

RELAX: Cooling down with music can enhance your life. Songs should be slow and low. Such as:

-Cowboy Junkies, *The Trinity Sessions* (Geffen)

-Chet Baker, *The best of Chet Baker Plays* (Capitol).

SLEEP: Skip anything with lyrics

-*Tune Your Brain with Mozart: Relax* (Deutsche Grammophon).

UPLIFT: Listen to music in a major key that is upbeat, bright and peppy with a soaring melody. Even better if it starts low and slow (where your mood is) and builds to an exciting finish.

-Ludwig van Beethoven, “*Finale to Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, Ode to Joy*” (Royal Classics)

-Otis Redding, “*Try a Little Tenderness,*” *Dreams to Remember: The Otis Redding Anthology* (WEA/Atlantic/Rhino).

FOCUS: Use music to induce concentration. If you listen to music with a steady pace while you learn new material it may help improve recall.

-Johann Sebastian Bach, *The Art of the Fugue, Musical Offering* (Academy

of St. Martin in the Fields, Philips).

-George Frideric Handel, *Concerti Grossi* (Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Deutsche Grammophon).

CREATE: Music strengthens the connection between left and right brain functions for discovering, analysis and implementation of ideas.

-Peter Gabriel, *Passion* (Geffen).

-John Coltrane, *A Love Supreme* (Impulse).

CLEANSE: The recommendation is for loud, pounding stuff but keep it short. Use this music only to discharge strong negative emotions such as anger, frustration and grief.

-Hole, *Live Through This* (DGC Records).

-Nine Inch Nails, *Broken* (Interscope).

-Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, "Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 1 in B Flat minor, Op 23" *Tune Your Brain with Tchaikovsky: Cleanse* (Deutsche Grammophon).

HEAL: Music can significantly impact pulse rate, pain, anxiety, stress levels and blood pressure. Music can help you manage your pain and cope with an illness.

-*Celtic Treasure* (Dargason).

-Sarah McLachlan, *Mirrorball* (Arista).