



# A Healthy Outlook!

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## MUSIC Gets You Moving and More!

MUSIC HAS BEEN AROUND since ancient times. It is part of every known culture. It can get your foot tapping, lift your mood, and even help you recall a distant memory. Did you know that music can bring other health benefits? Scientists are exploring the different ways music stimulates healthier bodies and minds.

“When you listen to or create music, it affects how you think, feel, move, and more,” says neuroscientist Dr. Robert



Finkelstein, who co-leads NIH’s music and health initiative. “Today, modern technologies are helping researchers learn more about how the brain works, what parts of the brain respond to music, and how music might help ease symptoms of certain diseases and conditions,” he explains.

### Your Brain on Music

The brain is a complex processing hub. It’s the control center of your nervous system, the network of nerve cells that carry messages to and from your body and the brain. A healthy brain tries to make sense of the world around you and the constant information it receives, including sound and music.

“Sound is an important and profound force in our lives,” explains Northwestern University neuroscientist Dr. Nina Kraus. “The more we exercise our sound processing in the brain, the

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better the brain becomes at making sense of sound and the world around us. Music does this more than any other sound.”

Music and other sounds enter the ear as sound waves. These create vibrations on our eardrum that are transformed into electrical signals. The electrical signals travel up the auditory nerve to the brain’s auditory cortex. This brain area interprets the sound into something we recognize and understand.

But music affects more than the brain areas that process sound. Using techniques that take pictures of the brain, like fMRI, scientists have found that music affects other brain areas. When music stimulates the brain, it shows up on brain images as flickers of bright light. Studies have shown that music “lights up” brain areas

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## Upcoming Events:

### CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

To support our caregivers, MCPS EAP offers a Caregiver Support Group, designed to provide helpful resources and establish connections among the caregivers within our MCPS community. The meetings are held from 4:15-5:30 p.m., at 45 West Gude Drive. Guest speakers present on important topics related to caring for a loved one. All are welcome to attend.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** *about the events or to register, please call the EAP at 240-314-1040.*

## Music Gets You Moving...

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involved in emotion, memory, and even physical movement.

“Music can help facilitate movement,” Finkelstein explains. NIH-funded scientists are investigating whether music can help patients with movement disorders, like Parkinson’s disease. Patients with this condition slowly lose their ability to walk and move over time.

“Studies show that when a certain beat is embedded in music, it can help people with Parkinson’s disease walk,” Finkelstein says. Another study is looking at how dance compares to other types of exercise in people with Parkinson’s disease. There is also evidence that music may be helpful for people with other health conditions, including Alzheimer’s disease, dementia, traumatic brain injury, stroke, aphasia, autism, and hearing loss.

**Source:** <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/sites/nihNIH/files/2018/January/NIHNIHJan2018.pdf>. For more information, visit <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2018/01/sound-health>.

## Ask the EAP:

**Q.** *If I am in trouble for lateness, attendance, or a work-performance issue, will going to the EAP get me out of it?*

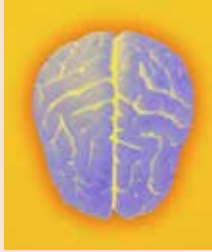
**A.** If a personal problem is the cause of lateness, attendance, or a performance problem, working with the EAP on the issue can only help. However, the expectation is that you will need to improve your work performance, whether or not you participate in the EAP.

**Do you have a question for the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?** Send your questions to [Jeff Becker at Jeffrey\\_Becker@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Jeff_Becker@mcpsmd.org) or via the Pony mail.

“Music is to the soul what words are to the mind.”

~ MODEST MOUSE

([HTTPS://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/MODEST\\_MOUSE](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modest_Mouse))



## How to be Less of a PERFECTIONIST

### Create a Support Network for Yourself—

Seek out people who are not perfectionists. Encourage your support network not to be rigid or moralistic in their attempts to keep you on an honest course. Look for people who forgive and forget when mistakes, failures, offenses, or backsliding occur. Ask them to tell you when they think you are being rigid, unrealistic, or idealistic in your behavior. Ask them to give you reinforcement for any positive change, no matter how small. Seek out people who have a sincere interest in your personal growth.

**Lower Your Expectations—**It is very important to understand that it is unrealistic for you to expect to change your behavior (or someone else’s) immediately or completely.

### Make a List of the Advantages and Disadvantages of Being Perfect—

You may find that perfection is too costly. Perhaps you will discover that relationship problems, endless working, and other compulsive behaviors are too high a price to pay for the results you gain from your perfectionist way of being.

**Pay Attention to Your Behavior and Attitudes—**As you see yourself behaving in a perfectionist way, take note. In the beginning, just observe yourself. Keep a log if it helps you see your behavior more clearly. You do not have to make any changes until you have a good idea of your specific behaviors and thoughts.

**Try Some New Thoughts and Behaviors—**Begin to substitute the alternative behaviors you identified earlier. If possible, ask someone from your support network for feedback. Observe your feelings and thoughts as you try new things.

**Review Your Goals and Make Sure They Are Realistic—**By having achievable, realistic goals, gradually, you will see that less-than-perfect results are not as disastrous as you thought they would be.

**Set Strict Time Limits for Your Projects—**When the time is up, move on to another task or take a break.

**Make Friends with Criticism—**Many perfectionists take criticism personally and respond defensively. If someone criticizes you when you make a mistake, the easiest thing to do is to simply admit it. Remind yourself that you are human, meaning sometimes you will make mistakes. People who never make mistakes are no longer learning or growing. Learn to reframe criticism as information you can learn from.

When you let go of the fantasy that humans must be perfect to have value in this world, you are less likely to feel angry or embarrassed when you make a mistake. You will see that criticism is information that you can learn from, and you will no longer need to avoid it.

**Source:** Adapted from the article How to be Less of a Perfectionist and Enjoy Life More, by Pat James, M.A., from the Therapists Newsletter. Used with permission.



## EAP Is Open All SUMMER

THE EAP REMAINS OPEN throughout the summer months.

**Feel free to call us at 240-314-1040**

to schedule an appointment to meet with a counselor.

The summer also is a good time to check out our website:

[www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/eap](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/eap). It is full of

information about the EAP and the services we provide as well as resources related to personal issues and concerns you might be experiencing.

## Stress RELIEF

THE PACE AND CHALLENGES of modern life make stress management necessary for everyone.

- ◆ **To monitor your stress, first identify your triggers.**
- ◆ **What makes you feel angry, tense, worried, or irritable?**
- ◆ **Do you often get headaches or an upset stomach with no medical cause?**

Some stressors, such as job pressures, relationship problems, or financial concerns, are easy to identify. But daily hassles and demands, such as waiting in a long line or being late to a meeting, also contribute to your stress level.

Even essentially positive events, such as getting married or buying a house, can be stressful. Any change to your life can cause stress.

Many people benefit from practices such as deep breathing, tai chi, yoga,

meditation or being in nature. Set aside time for yourself. Get a massage, soak in a bubble bath, dance, listen to music, watch a comedy—whatever helps you relax.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle will help you manage stress. Eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly and get enough sleep. Make a conscious effort to spend less time in front of a screen—television, tablet, computer, and phone—and more time relaxing.

Stress will not disappear from your life. And stress management needs to be ongoing. But, by paying attention to what causes your stress and practicing ways to relax, you can counter some of the bad effects of stress and increase your ability to cope with challenges.

**Source:** Excerpt from the article Stress Basics, written by Mayo Clinic staff. Printed with permission. [www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/basics/stress-basics/hlv-20049495?reDate=23042018](http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/basics/stress-basics/hlv-20049495?reDate=23042018)

## WHAT TYPES OF FOOD should be consumed for optimum health?

THE IMMUNE SYSTEM is composed of an army of cells that search out and destroy invading

### A poor diet is the number one reason the immune system breaks down.

viruses. It is a voracious user of vitamins and minerals. Every few days, the body replaces one-fourth of all immune cells, and a strong immune system can release 10 million antibodies per hour into the bloodstream to attack viruses.

Here are six critical immunity nutrients the body needs on a daily basis:

1. **Copper**—a trace mineral that acts like a shot of growth hormone for white blood cells and turns them into specialized attack forces. Can be found in **oysters, soy, and beans**.
2. **Quercetin**—a natural plant chemical that disarms free radicals, which sabotage the immune system's defenses. Can be found in apples, onions, garlic, tomatoes, and peppers.
3. **Zinc**—responsible for producing billions of white blood cells daily. Can be found in **pork, beef, whole grains, yogurt, beans, and milk**.
4. **Vitamin E**—involved in producing cytokines, a chemical messenger that activates a host of defensive weapons to kill viruses. Can be found in **spinach, sunflower seeds, eggs, peanuts, fish, margarine, and vegetable oils**.
5. **Folate/Vitamin B12**—involved in the rapid multiplication of immune cells and also oversees that white blood cells are replicating in correct shape to fight viruses. Can be found in **asparagus, orange juice, dairy products,**

**kidney beans, and whole grains.**

6. **Vitamin A**—important to the skin, the first line of defense for the immune system. Can be found in **orange vegetables (carrots, squash, and sweet potatoes)** that contain beta-carotene, which the body turns into Vitamin A.

**Mushrooms** help in the production of white blood cells and a cup of black or green tea a day also strengthens the immune system.

**Tea** is a source of polyphenols (antioxidants), which clean up free radicals—damaging compounds that can hurt DNA and accelerate aging.

**Sources:** Prevention magazine, and Shady Grove and Washington Adventist hospitals. The facts presented in this article are intended for informational purposes only. For additional information, please speak with your physician. Printed with permission.

## BALANCING Internet Usage

DO YOU SOMETIMES feel that you are using the Internet too much? If you are concerned about how much you use the Internet, consider these suggestions:

- ♦ **Ask yourself, "What am I missing out on when I spend so much time on the 'net?'"** Write these activities down and decrease your Internet time to do some of those activities.
- ♦ **Set reasonable Internet-use goals and stick to them.** Take frequent breaks, at least 5 minutes each hour, and do some other activity.
- ♦ **Alter your routine to break your usage patterns.** If you spend evenings on the Internet, start limiting your use to mornings, or alternate your morning/evening usage.
- ♦ **Find other people to talk to.** Many people become hooked on the Internet through talking with others online. You can find people to talk to by joining a club, going to a concert, dining out with friends, or taking a training class.
- ♦ **Examine underlying issues of overuse.** Frequently, Internet overuse is a symptom of some other problem, such as feelings of emptiness or self-doubt. Seek assistance for what is fueling your Internet use.
- ♦ **Seek out friends and acquaintances who "couldn't care less" about the Internet.** Take time to appreciate the reality that everyone is online.
- ♦ **Stay connected with the off-line world.** Visit newsstands and book and music stores, and participate in entertainment such as dance, museums, music, and live theater. Long novels and poetry readings are hard to experience online.
- ♦ **Treat the Internet as a tool.** Focus on the fact that the Internet is a means to an end. Plan your strategy—whether you are looking for information or entertainment—with the end in mind and you will save valuable time.



Source: Adapted from an article appearing on the UCSF website. <https://hr.ucsf.edu/hr.php?A=1070&AT=&org=we>. Used with permission.

*"I would teach children music, physics, and philosophy, but most importantly music, for the patterns in music and all the arts are the key to learning."*

~ PLATO  
([HTTPS://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/PLATO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plato))

*"You may be disappointed if you fail, but you are doomed if you don't try."*

~ BEVERLY SILLS,  
OPERA SINGER  
(1929 - 2007)

### *A Healthy Outlook!*

*To help employees with troubling issues before they become overwhelming.*



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE  
SPECIALISTS: Jennifer Alfonso  
Jeff Becker  
Robyn Rosenbauer

EAP  
45 West Gude Drive, Suite 1300  
Rockville, Maryland 20850  
phone: 240-314-1040  
[www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/eap](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/eap)

Important Notice: Information in *A Healthy Outlook!* is for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional. For further questions or help with specific problems or personal concerns, contact your employee assistance professional.

You may contact us or send your questions and comments to [Jeffrey\\_Becker@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Jeffrey_Becker@mcpsmd.org)

Please note that e-mail is not necessarily confidential.

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