

How music strengthens the brain

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Music soothes, energizes and inspires. It also fortifies pathways in your brain that neurologists say can lead to a better understanding of cognition and dementia.

To help better understand how music strengthens the brain, Dr. Bernard

Bendok, chair of the Department of Neurosurgery at Mayo Clinic in Arizona, explains how music strikes a chord with researchers in this Mayo Clinic Minute.

"One of the higher functions that a [human brain](#) can engage with is the performance of music," says Bendok. "As you master those instruments, there are certain connections that grow and get enhanced in the brain. The brain likes to be challenged. We know that the more languages you know, the less your risk of dementia. And music happens to be a language."

"Understanding music allows neurologists and neurosurgeons and neuroscientists to better understand the brain," continues Bendok. "It's a great way to better map the brain, both for enhancing the safety of surgery, but also for exploring new avenues for new therapies for various conditions of the human [brain](#), including [degenerative diseases](#) and [memory problems](#). By understanding these pathways that contribute to musical memory and cognitive memory, this will allow us to solve the problems of degeneration like dementia, but also open new opportunities to enhance function."

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