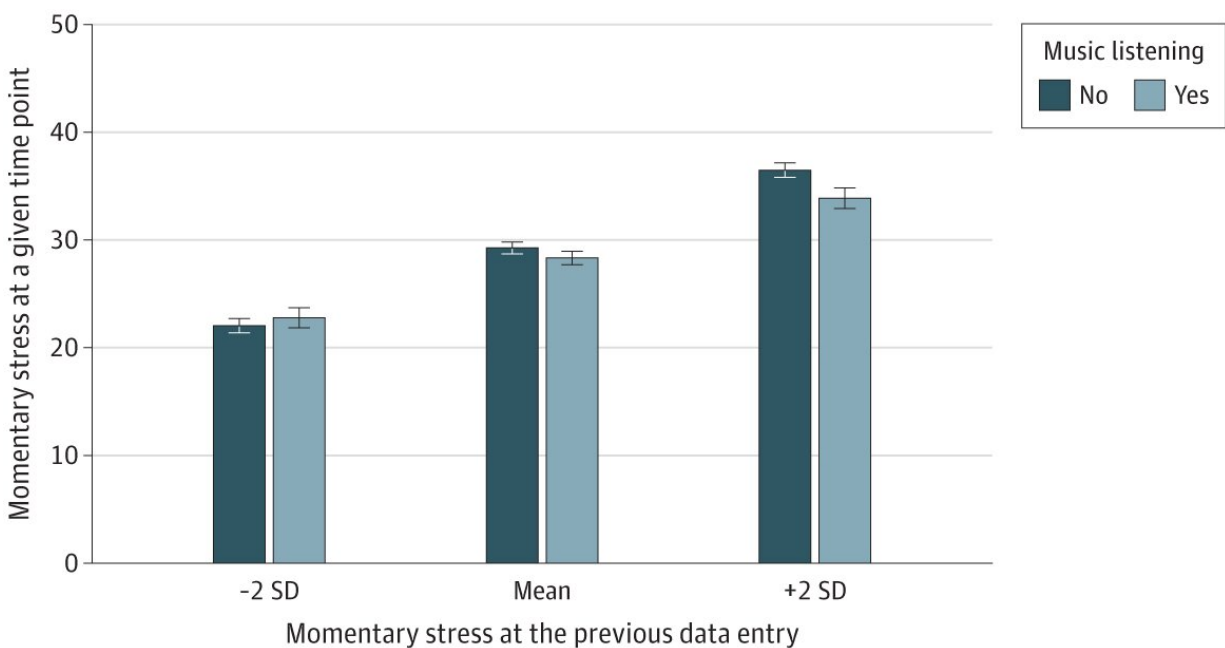


# Study shows that listening to music during stressful times can boost your mood and reduce stress

January 24 2023, by Bob Yirka



Differential Associations Between Music Listening and Momentary Stress Depending on Prior Stress Levels Momentary stress varied as a function of music listening and prior stress levels. The y-axis displays momentary stress assessed at a given time point. The x-axis displays categories of momentary stress levels at the previous data entry. Error bars represent SEs. Credit: *JAMA Network Open* (2023). DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.50382

A team of researchers at the University of Vienna has found evidence

showing that listening to music when stressed can boost a person's mood and help them relax. In their paper published on the *JAMA Network Open* site, the group describes an experiment they conducted with volunteers under stress caused by living under the rules of the lockdown during the early days of the global pandemic.

Prior research has suggested that listening to music can temporarily reduce feelings of [stress](#), but as the researchers note, most such studies have been cross-sectional or retrospective, which they note can lead to unintentional biases. Anecdotal evidence has also suggested that music effectively reduces stress. In this new effort, the researchers sought to find more concrete evidence of the mental health benefits of listening to music.

To that end, they designed and executed a study that involved creating a [smartphone app](#) for use by [volunteers](#). The app allowed 711 adult participants to record their mood and music listening habits five times a day for one week. During each query, each [volunteer](#) was chose a current level of stress from a menu; likewise, they rated their momentary mood from a menu. All the volunteers lived either in Austria or Italy. The researchers carried out the study during the early days of the pandemic when people were told to stay in their homes and businesses closed, creating a global environment of enormous fear, tension and stress.

The researchers found what they describe as a correlation between lowered stress levels and instances of listening to music—most particularly when listening to uplifting or happy music. The researchers note that prior research has shown that happy music can activate parts of the brain associated with mood regulation.

The researchers also found that the impact of listening to music over a period of time can impact a person's memories. Those volunteers who listened to more happy music during the lockdown reported feeling less

anxious after it was all over than other volunteers. They conclude that [clinicians](#) working with stressed clients might find it useful to suggest they put on some happy [music](#).

**More information:** Anja C. Feneberg et al, Perceptions of Stress and Mood Associated With Listening to Music in Daily Life During the COVID-19 Lockdown, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.50382](#)

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