

Meditation and music may help reverse early memory loss in adults at risk for Alzheimer's disease

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In a recent study of adults with early memory loss, a West Virginia University research team lead by Dr. Kim Innes found that practice of a simple meditation or music listening program may have multiple benefits for older adults with preclinical memory loss.

In this [randomized controlled trial](#), 60 older adults with subjective cognitive decline (SCD), a condition that may represent a preclinical stage of Alzheimer's disease, were assigned to either a beginner [meditation](#) (Kirtan Kriya) or music listening program and asked to practice 12 minutes/day for 12 weeks. As detailed in a paper recently published by the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, both the meditation and music groups showed marked and significant improvements in subjective memory function and objective cognitive performance at 3 months. These included domains of cognitive functioning most likely to be affected in preclinical and early stages of dementia (e.g., attention, executive function, processing speed, and subjective memory function). The substantial gains observed in memory and cognition were maintained or further increased at 6 months (3 months post-intervention).

As explained in the research team's previous paper (*J Alzheimer's Dis.* 52 (4): 1277-1298), both intervention groups also showed improvements in sleep, mood, stress, well-being and quality of life, with gains that were that were particularly pronounced in the meditation group; again, all

benefits were sustained or further enhanced at 3 months post-intervention.

The findings of this trial suggest that two simple mind-body practices, Kirtan Kriya meditation and [music listening](#), may not only improve mood, sleep, and quality of life, but also boost cognition and help reverse perceived [memory loss](#) in [older adults](#) with SCD.

More information: Kim E. Innes et al. Meditation and Music Improve Memory and Cognitive Function in Adults with Subjective Cognitive Decline: A Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial, *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* (2017). [DOI: 10.3233/JAD-160867](https://doi.org/10.3233/JAD-160867)

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