



# The Power of Music

## *Curating Summer Tunes for Stress Relief and Relaxation*

As the summer sun graces us with its warmth, there's something magical about the season that brings joy and relaxation to our hearts. One tool that can enhance this experience is the power of music. Beyond its ability to entertain, music holds an incredible influence on our mental health. In this article, we'll explore how curated summer playlists can serve as a powerful tool for stress relief and relaxation. So, let's tune in to the melodies that can lift our spirits and help us unwind amidst the summer's bliss.

## The Therapeutic Effects of Music on Mental Health

Music has been cherished for millennia, and for good reason. It touches us on a profound level and has a unique ability to impact our emotions and moods. From upbeat tunes that make us want to dance to soulful melodies that bring tears to our eyes, music has the power to elicit a wide range of feelings. Scientifically, music has been proven to stimulate the brain's reward centre, releasing feel-good neurotransmitters like dopamine and endorphins, which can boost our mood and reduce stress.

When we listen to music that resonates with us, it can help us process emotions, alleviate anxiety, and provide a sense of comfort during challenging times. This is especially true during summer, when our desire for relaxation and stress relief is heightened.

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## Curating Your Summer Playlist for Stress Relief

Creating a curated summer playlist for stress relief doesn't require any musical expertise. It's all about selecting songs that evoke positive emotions and align with the atmosphere of the season. Here are some tips to help you get started:

- **Embrace the Feel-Good Vibes:** Look for songs with upbeat tempos and positive lyrics that make you want to sing along. Think of tunes that remind you of carefree summer days and bring a smile to your face.
- **Nature's Symphony:** Incorporate sounds of nature, like gentle waves crashing on the shore or the chirping of birds. These natural sounds can enhance relaxation and create a sense of tranquillity.
- **Mindful Melodies:** Choose instrumental pieces with soothing melodies or ambient sounds. Such music can help quiet a busy mind and guide you into a state of relaxation.
- **Nostalgic Tunes:** Add songs that hold sentimental value or trigger happy memories. Listening to familiar tunes from the past can evoke nostalgia and boost your mood.
- **Explore New Horizons:** Don't hesitate to discover new artists and genres. Summer is the perfect time for musical exploration, and you might stumble upon hidden gems that resonate with your soul.

## Using Your Summer Playlist for Relaxation

Now that you've crafted your stress-relieving summer playlist, it's time to incorporate it into your daily life. Here are some ways to use your curated tunes for relaxation:

- **Morning Melodies:** Start your day with uplifting music that energizes and sets a positive tone for the day ahead.
- **Midday Break:** Take a short break during the day to immerse yourself in your playlist. Close your eyes, breathe deeply, and let the music transport you to a peaceful state of mind.
- **Outdoor Escapes:** Whether you're lounging by the pool or having a picnic in the park, let your playlist be the soundtrack to your outdoor escapades.
- **Evening Unwind:** Wind down in the evening with calming melodies that help you let go of the day's stresses and prepare for a restful night's sleep.

As the summer sun shines brightly, let the music be your companion on this journey of relaxation and stress relief. Curating a summer playlist with melodies that bring joy and tranquillity can be a powerful tool for enhancing your mental health and overall well-being. Allow the power of music to uplift your spirits, soothe your soul, and make this summer a season of harmony and inner peace. So, press play and let the melodies carry you away on a blissful summer adventure.

# Cheeseburger Quesadillas

Indulge in a mouthwatering fusion of two classics with our irresistible Cheeseburger Quesadillas recipe sourced from Taste of Home. This delightful dish combines the juicy goodness of a cheeseburger with the zesty flair of a quesadilla, creating a sensational treat that will satisfy all your comfort food cravings in one delicious bite.

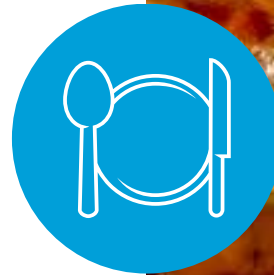
## Ingredients

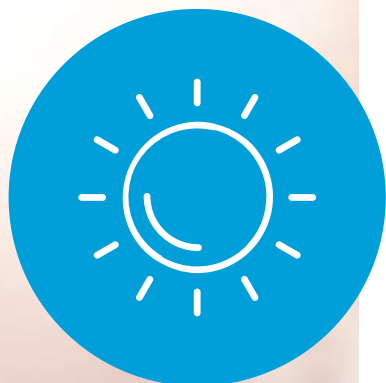
1 pound ground beef  
 1 cup ketchup  
 1/3 cup prepared mustard  
 4 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled  
 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce  
 2/3 cup mayonnaise  
 2 tablespoons 2% milk  
 2 tablespoons dill pickle relish  
 1/4 teaspoon pepper  
 8 flour tortillas  
 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese  
 Optional: Shredded lettuce and chopped tomatoes

## Instructions

- In a large skillet, cook beef over medium heat, until no longer pink, 6-8 minutes, crumbling beef; drain. Stir in ketchup, mustard, bacon and Worcestershire sauce; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 5-7 minutes or until slightly thickened, stirring occasionally.
- Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine mayonnaise, milk, relish and pepper.
- Preheat the griddle over medium heat. Sprinkle 4 tortillas with cheese; top with beef mixture and remaining tortillas. Place on a griddle; cook until tortillas are golden brown and cheese is melted, 1-2 minutes on each side. Serve with sauce and, if desired, lettuce and tomatoes.

Source: [Taste of Home, Jan 11, 2023](#)





# Sunshine & Serotonin

*The Connection Between Sunlight and Mood*

Isn't it wonderful how the sun's rays can instantly lift our spirits and put a smile on our faces? Well, guess what? There's some fascinating science behind that sunny feeling! Let's dive into the fantastic connection between sunlight, and serotonin production, and how it can work wonders for our mental well-being. So, get ready to bask in the warm glow of knowledge and discover why sunshine is an essential ingredient for a happy mind.

## Sunlight and Serotonin: The Happy Duo

Picture this: when you step outside into the sunlight, your body sets in motion a magical process. The sun's rays work their magic on your skin, prompting your body to create vitamin D. And guess what? Vitamin D is like a best friend to serotonin—the superstar neurotransmitter responsible for happiness, contentment, and keeping our moods in check. The more sunlight you soak up, the more vitamin D is produced, leading to higher levels of serotonin. It's like a recipe for a happiness boost!

## Sunlight's Impact on Our Mood

Now, here comes the exciting part! Sunshine doesn't just play with chemicals; it has a direct impact on our mood too. Research shows that less sunlight exposure can make us vulnerable to mood troubles, like the infamous "winter blues" or seasonal affective disorder (SAD). During those

gloomy days, you might feel a bit down, tired, or less focused. But fear not! Sunlight is here to save the day.

## The Bright Side of Sunlight for Mental Health

Let's not underestimate the power of sunlight for our mental well-being. If you're wondering how to welcome more sunshine into your life, we've got some delightful tips to brighten up your days:

- **Sunlit Strolls:** Next time you're out and about, take a little detour and treat yourself to a sunlit stroll. It's like happiness on two legs!
- **Nature and You:** Combine the goodness of nature with mindfulness practices like yoga or meditation. A little nature escape can do wonders for your peace of mind.
- **Sunshine at Home:** Why keep the curtains closed when you can let the sunshine in? Open those curtains wide and let your living spaces dance with sunlight.
- **Fun in the Sun with Friends:** Plan picnics or outdoor activities with friends. The sun's rays and the laughter of good company—now, that's a winning combo!

So, my sunny friends, let's embrace the incredible connection between sunshine and serotonin. The more time we spend in the sun, the happier our minds become. With a sprinkle of sunlight in our lives, we can keep our spirits high and our hearts light. So, don't be shy—go out and soak up that sunshine! Let's keep our minds as bright as the sun above. Here's to happiness, well-being, and a little bit of sunshine magic!

# Poem of the Month

## The Wild Swans at Coole

BY WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

The trees are in their autumn beauty,  
The woodland paths are dry,  
Under the October twilight the water  
Mirrors a still sky;  
Upon the brimming water among the stones  
Are nine-and-fifty swans.

The nineteenth autumn has come upon me  
Since I first made my count;  
I saw, before I had well finished,  
All suddenly mount  
And scatter wheeling in great broken rings  
Upon their clamorous wings.

I have looked upon those brilliant creatures,  
And now my heart is sore.  
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,  
The first time on this shore,  
The bell-beat of their wings above my head,  
Trode with a lighter tread.

Unwearied still, lover by lover,  
They paddle in the cold  
Companionable streams or climb the air;  
Their hearts have not grown old;  
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,  
Attend upon them still.

But now they drift on the still water,  
Mysterious, beautiful;  
Among what rushes will they build,  
By what lake's edge or pool  
Delight men's eyes when I awake some day  
To find they have flown away?



# Managing Stress During Summer Travel

Summer is the perfect time to go on exciting adventures and explore new destinations. Travel also offers a wonderful opportunity to relax and unwind. However, the journey itself can sometimes be a source of stress and anxiety. Here are some practical tips and coping mechanisms that will help you to make the most of your vacation and return home feeling refreshed and revitalised.

## Plan Ahead and Stay Organised

One of the primary stress triggers during travel is feeling unprepared and disorganised. Reduce travel-related stress by planning ahead and creating a checklist for essential items, such as travel documents, medications, chargers, and personal essentials. Make sure to make your bookings in advance to avoid last-minute rushes. Having a well-structured itinerary and knowing what to expect can instil a sense of control and ease anxiety about the unknown.

## Practice Mindful Packing

Packing efficiently can significantly alleviate stress during travel. Avoid overpacking by carefully selecting versatile clothing and essential items. Consider the weather and activities at your destination and pack accordingly. Additionally, include items that provide comfort and relaxation, such as a favourite book, headphones for soothing music, or a travel journal. Packing mindfully not only reduces physical burden but also helps create a more enjoyable vacation experience.



## Incorporate Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques

Amidst the excitement of travel, it's essential to take moments of calm and relaxation. Practice mindfulness techniques, such as deep breathing or meditation, to centre yourself and alleviate stress during transit or at your destination. Engaging in relaxation activities, such as taking leisurely walks on the beach, enjoying a spa treatment, or observing a stunning sunset, can promote a sense of tranquillity and rejuvenation.

## Embrace Flexibility and Patience

Travel comes with its share of unpredictabilities, from flight delays to unexpected weather changes. Embrace the idea that not everything may go as planned, and allow room for flexibility. Cultivate patience when facing challenges, and remember that the journey itself is an adventure. Approach hiccups with a positive attitude, and you'll find that stress dissipates more easily, leaving you open to new and enriching experiences.

## Disconnect to Reconnect

While staying connected is essential, consider disconnecting from digital devices during your vacation. Limit screen time and resist the urge to constantly check emails or social media. Give yourself permission to be present in the moment and fully immerse yourself in the travel experience. Disconnecting from the virtual world will help you connect more deeply with your surroundings, travel companions, and yourself.

# 3 Quick & Effective Techniques to Reduce Stress in Minutes

In today's fast-paced world, stress has become a prevalent part of our lives. But fear not, as this article introduces three effective stress-reduction techniques that take just minutes to practice. Let's explore these quick and effective stress-busters together.

## Deep Breathing Exercises

When stress strikes, take a few minutes to practice deep breathing. Close your eyes, inhale deeply through your nose for a count of four, hold your breath for a count of four, and then exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of six. Repeat this process for several cycles. Deep breathing triggers the body's relaxation response, helping to reduce stress and anxiety quickly.

## Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

PMR is a technique that involves tensing and relaxing different muscle groups to release physical tension. Start by tensing the muscles in your toes for a few seconds, then release and let the tension go. Gradually work your way up through your body, focusing on each muscle group, until you reach your head. PMR can be done in just 10-15 minutes and is an effective way to unwind and de-stress.

## Mindful Gratitude Journaling

Grab a notebook and jot down three things you are grateful for at this moment. They can be simple things, like the sunshine outside, a delicious meal, or a supportive friend. Practising gratitude helps shift your focus from stressors to positive aspects of your life, fostering a more optimistic mindset and reducing stress levels.

Remember, even when life gets busy, incorporating these quick and effective stress-reducing techniques into your daily routine can make a remarkable difference in maintaining mental well-being.





# Thank you to our sponsors!

The CORE Ireland monthly newsletter is an important resource for anyone interested in mental health and well-being. It provides valuable information and practical advice to help people maintain good mental health and improve overall well-being. Thanks to the support of our incredible sponsors, we are able to continue producing this valuable resource for the benefit of our readers.

We were honoured to have the students from NLN Navan join us at our Coffee4CORE event this month, where they presented their impressive book, 'Butterfly Tales.'

These talented students from the Freshstart course were recently awarded the Pieta Amber Flag for their outstanding work in highlighting mental health obstacles and sharing effective coping mechanisms.

'Butterfly Tales' beautifully narrates the stories of four characters with autism, ADHD, social anxiety, and depression, offering hope and inspiration to those facing similar challenges.

We commend all the students involved for their dedication and creativity in raising awareness about mental health, and we feel privileged to have been part of this meaningful occasion. Their work is a shining example of the positive impact young individuals can have on society.



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