

ALL IN

The Group Exercise Challenge

MUSIC AND EXERCISE



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

You do not have to go far inside a YMCA to realize that many people prefer to listen to music when exercising. For most people the attraction is the pleasant diversion that the music provides from their workout; however, the benefits of exercising to music go beyond the psychological effects. Music can have a physiological impact as well.

BENEFITS OF MOVING TO THE MUSIC

Research has shown that music and the association of music to a workout can enhance the experience and even improve performance during a workout. A study conducted at Brunel University in London and another published in the Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology demonstrate that working out to music:

- **Narrows attention, diverting the mind from fatigue**
- **Lowers perceived exertion during moderate-intensity exercise**
- **Helps exercisers feel more positive during high-intensity exercise**
- **Provides a psychological boost that can help you push through tough spots**
- **Increases efficiency**
- **Reduces oxygen consumption**
- **Increases endurance**

These benefits were not realized when music was used in the background, nor do they come from listening to just any music while exercising. The benefits were realized when study participants exercised to the beat of the music, or when exercise was **synchronized with the music.**

One study was conducted using runners as the test group and the other using cyclists. Synchronizing exercise to the music means the runners matched the foot striking the ground to the beat of the music. Essentially, every thump of the bass was matched by a footfall. In the case of the cyclists, the pedaling cadence was matched to the tempo of the song.

MUSIC AND GROUP EXERCISE

Finding and creating a playlist of songs that have the correct tempo to match your workout speed and the appropriate intensity to motivate your workout could mean a huge time investment. The great news is that you do not have to spend your time looking for music. Music plays a major role in some Group Exercise workouts. Programs such as Active Together, Balance & Flex Together, Cycle Together, Cycle 30 Together, Defend Together, and Strength Train Together are designed so that the exercise movements match the music. Whether you are dancing to the rhythm, pedaling to the pulse, or moving the bar to the beat, moving with the music draws attention to the music and helps you get more from your workout. The music is a powerful part of the experience.

Have you ever run on a treadmill or an elliptical trainer without music? If so then you have probably had one of those workouts that never seem to end, you are looking at your watch every two minutes, and you are just not motivated to continue. The programs listed above are experiences based on interaction with music. They are a great way to realize the benefits of exercising to music. Your workout will likely pass more easily and you will probably be more motivated, making it a more enjoyable and successful experience.