

# Chill-out tunes amplify recovery after workout

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Credit: Brunel University London

Your playlist is key to getting the most out of your post-exercise recovery and can help you stick to your routine, scientists show for the first time.

The brain-hacking effects of upbeat tracks to blast you out of feeling tired are long-known, and now scientists show soothing sounds speed recovery and make you feel better after hard [exercise](#).

It means you can DJ your playlist according to how you want to feel at each stage of your workout from beginning to end.

What's more is slower chill-out [music](#) puts a positive spin on how you remember feeling after exercise. And that's important because enjoyment helps make exercise a habit.

"Sedative music can positively influence psychological and psychophysiological aspects of recovery," said Brunel University London's Dr Costas Karageorghis.

"This study marks a new phase in harnessing the power of music in exercise. This takes research into the effects of music on exercise into a new realm. It is part of a bigger picture of how to tailor music to how you want to feel and how to maximise its use at different stages of a workout to elevate your mood and disassociate from pain."

Forty-two people – 21 men and 21 women – had to cycle at a constant speed of 75rpm as a 300g weight was added to the bike each minute.

When they reached exhaustion, they had a brief period of active recovery on the bike and then sat in a comfy chair listening to an iPod – something the researchers call 'passive recovery'. The iPods played either upbeat pop tunes like Nicki Minaj's Super Bass, Cinema by Benny Benassi and The Killers' Mr. Brightside or sedative lyric-free tracks from a CD of music for hypnosis.



Credit: Brunel University London

Researchers monitored exerciser's levels of the [stress hormone cortisol](#), plus heart rate, blood pressure and their [emotional state](#). When exposed to the slow, sedative music, cortisol levels were reduced and the

emotional state of the exercisers was enhanced. Unexpectedly, they found women benefitted more from the sedative music during recovery than men, particularly in terms of their emotional state during recovery from the exhaustive exercise.

So if you want to maximise the recovery processes after exercise, absorbing, non-syncopated music with a simple harmonic structure is the way to go. Besides helping people tailor music to their recuperation, it could help people develop music streaming apps and compile workout playlists.

"Music and post-exercise [recovery](#) is relatively uncharted territory in my field and I'm really excited by it," said Dr Karageorghis. "We have a strong research foundation with which to build end-to-end music solutions and optimise how people the world over use music for exercise and health."

**More information:** Costas I. Karageorghis et al. Psychological and Psychophysiological Effects of Recuperative Music Postexercise, *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* (2017). [DOI: 10.1249/MSS.0000000000001497](#)

Provided by Brunel University London

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