



Sounds That Heal

10 Tools for Overcoming Stress, Depression and Pain

Sound is one of the most potent forces in the Universe. Every function of our mind, body and spirit is affected by sound. We are tuned into sound from our earliest moments. Hearing is the first sense to be activated in the womb, and the last to leave us when we pass on. It's ten times more accurate than vision. Creation stories from Hopi, Egyptian, Christian, Aboriginal, Hindu and Mayan cultures all describe sound as the force that created the world.¹ Ancient civilizations, including Mesopotamia, India, China, Greece and Aboriginal cultures had a profound respect for sound. They understood that individuals and society are shaped by the sounds they listen to. They used sophisticated systems of sound for wellness. Nada Yoga, for example, is a 2,000-year-old system that includes the science of vibration, musical intervals, harmonics, meditation, deep listening and the use of ragas—musical modes that are used at specific times of day to create specific emotional and physical effects.

Western medicine is rapidly rediscovering the power of sound for healing, and uncovering the science behind it. A growing body of research confirms that the right sounds promote healthy functioning of the immune, endocrine and autonomic systems. Harmonious sounds quickly reduce stress and promote deeply relaxed states that allow our bodies to return to balance. Cymascope make sound visible. They show how positive thoughts, combined with pure sounds, create beautiful mandalas in water. Since the human body is 60-80% water, we now see how sound literally re-patterns us, right down to our DNA.

Help for the Critically Ill-- Since 1991 oncologist Mitchell L. Gaynor has been achieving remarkable results with cancer patients by integrating music, vocalization, breathing, and meditation. He observes, "Sound can help people make shifts in perspective that normally take 1-2 years of meditation"². Some of the documented benefits of modern sound therapy include:

- Reduced stress and pain
- Release of grief, depression, anxiety
- Strengthened immune system
- Creation of more harmonious relationships
- Increased joy, confidence and sense of purpose

How Does Sound Therapy work? Sound therapy represents a convergence of modern physics, neuroscience, energy psychology, brain biology, music and spirituality. It's based on *psychoacoustics*--the science of how sound affects our nervous system. Sound therapy uses basic principles of physics, including the fact that everything is vibrating. Every cell and organ in your body vibrates and responds to every sound around you, whether you are actively listening or not. Each organ has it's own specific resonance, or frequency, and together they make up your composite frequency. When these vibrations

¹ Goldman, Jonathan (2008) *The 7 Secrets of Sound Healing*, Hay House, p. 2

² Gaynor, Mitchell, *The Healing Power of Sound: Recovery from Life-Threatening Illness Using Sound, Voice and Music*

are in harmony and balance, there is wellness. When a portion of the body is vibrating out of resonance, there is dis-ease.

Sound travels through our bodies four times faster than through the air. Every part of us synchronizes with strong sounds. Ever get a song stuck in your head? This synchronizing phenomenon, called *entrainment*, demonstrates how sound affects you. Your heartbeat, breathing, blood pressure, brainwaves, nervous system and overall Chi move in “lock step” with the sound vibrations surrounding you. Alfred Tomatis, a French medical doctor known as the “Einstein of the ear”, described sound as a “nutrient for the nervous system”. Higher pitch sounds charge (energize) our brain, and lower frequencies discharge (relax) the system.

Sounds That Harm

Are there sounds that are actually harmful? Yes. Sounds that disrupt the natural rhythms of the body create many problems. Dr. Larry Dossey explains that “High levels of unpleasant sounds cause blood vessels to constrict; increase the blood pressure, pulse, and respiratory rates; release extra fats into the bloodstream; and cause the bloods’ magnesium level to fall.”³ Noise pollution is one of the most common health hazards worldwide and aversive sounds are increasing exponentially. Many studies document the negative effects. For example, children who live near railroad tracks have lower reading scores.

Beware! Some groups deliberately use music to harm others. For example, John Phillips of *The Mama’s and the Papas*, stated, ‘by carefully controlling the sequence of rhythms’ any rock group can create audience hysteria consciously and deliberately.’ “The band then proceeded to prove it at a concert in Phoenix, Arizona. Using a certain combination of rhythms, they incited a riot.”⁴

10 Tools for Creating Sound Health

1: Listen to Music that Makes Your Heart “Sing”—The Persian poet, Hafiz, said, “Stay close to any sounds that make you glad you are alive.” It seems many people already follow this advice. Several years ago, ¾ of the people who responded to a *Prevention* magazine health survey, said that they listen to music to ease tension and stress. And 82% said it brought them significant relief.

Music elicits an automatic emotional response, which varies from day to day, and person to person. Whether a particular piece of music is calming or stimulating depends not only on the nature of the music itself, but also on the memories associated with it. Brain waves relax to the extent that you have enjoyed the music. So choose music and sounds that you like.

2: Be Mindful of the Lyrics—Positive intentions and thoughts, combined with music, have an almost unequalled ability to uplift and heal. Choose wisely, because the opposite is also true. Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones performed a song, with hate lyrics and specific rhythms that caused audience members to inflict severe injury and death. He commented, “Something like that happens every time we perform that song.”⁵

³ Paul, Russill, *The Yoga of Sound*, p. XX

⁴ Tame, David. (1984) *The Secret Power of Music*, p. 152-3

⁵ Ibid, p. 154

3: Listen to Mother Nature—Some of the healthiest sounds are water--ocean waves or bubbling brooks which calm your nervous system, slow down your heartbeat, lower your blood pressure, slow down your breathing and put your brainwaves into the calm alpha state. High pitched bird songs energize the brain, and help you stay mentally relaxed and focused. Listen to high quality nature recordings, or get outdoors and enjoy the real thing.

4: Use Calming Breath—Your heartbeat, brainwaves and breathing rate are all tethered together. Changing one, changes them all. The easiest one to change is your breath. When you breathe slowly and calmly, your breathing calms the other systems. There are many effective breathing techniques. A simple one is take a deep breath, and then let out a sigh relief as your breath gently flows out. Then let the air come back into your lungs naturally. Repeat this for five minutes, whenever you feel the need for more mental clarity and calm.

5: Avoid Noise Pollution—Continued exposure to sounds over 100 decibels causes deafness. Hearing loss is painless, progressive and permanent. Once your hearing has been damaged, it cannot be regenerated. Hearing aids do not fully restore hearing, like eye glasses do. To preserve your hearing, avoid loud environments whenever possible. In many countries, 85 decibels is the maximum sound volume allowed in the workplace. Use ear plugs if necessary. When listening to music through ear buds, keep the volume low enough that you can still hear other sounds around you. Here are the noise volumes of some typical situations. There are decibel meter Apps for smart phones, so that you can measure the loudness of your specific location.

Decibels		Decibels	
120	Threshold of Pain	85	Heavy traffic
110	Low flying jet	75	Vacuum cleaner
105-120	Loud rock band	70	Normal conversation
100	Causes gradual deafness	50	Average office or living room
100	Riveting machine; subway train	30	Quiet countryside
95	Motorcycle	20	Whisper
90	Noisy factory; loudest orchestra	10	Gentle breeze

6: Free Your Voice—Rumi said, *“I want to sing like the birds and not care who is listening.”* Why not? Your own voice is the most powerful sound healing tool at your disposal. It’s free and portable. If you are a “wounded singer” (were told you have a crummy voice), now is the time to reclaim your right to sing. Just as you don’t need to be a professional athlete in order to workout at the gym, you don’t need to be a professional vocalist to sing. To get started, play vocal games with babies and children. Notice their wild abandon. Echo their delicious babbling, chortling, buzzing and humming. World-class vocalists do this to warm up their voices. You can too.

7: Hum Your Way to Happiness— If you are shy about singing, you can simply make lots of natural ,happy sounds, such as an appreciative “Ahhh”, Ooooo” or “Hmmm”. Studies show that humming increases nitrous oxide, which helps stimulate immune response and regulate blood pressure. In other studies humming improved hearing , reduced nasal congestion and reduced auditory hallucinations in hospitalized schizophrenics by 60%. If you are humming-challenged, get a cat who loves to purr and hold

it close. Cats purr at 25-150 Hz, which is in a range that speeds the healing of bones, tendons, ligaments and muscles, as well as providing pain relief.

8: Laugh Out Loud—The average six year old laughs 300 times a day, while adults only laugh an average of 47 times (and some days not at all!). Bernie Siegel documented the benefits of laughter in *Humor and Healing*. Not feeling very happy? “Fake it ‘till you make it” is just as good. Here’s how:

Take a deep breath and fill your belly with air. On the out-breath, start making a deep HUH, HUH, HUH laugh from the belly. After a bit, move up to the solar plexus area (upper belly) and do a HOH, HOH, HOH Santa Claus laugh. Next is HAH, HAH, HAH from the heart area. Then HEH, HEH, HEH from the throat area. A light sound (not sinister). And finally, HEE, HEE, HEE from the head area. This is a high potency tone that gives a quick energy pickup. For the best effect, do this with a group. You’ll feed off each other, and soon will be laughing authentically.

9: Try Some Sound Therapy Tools—Tuning forks, Tibetan bowls, drums, rattles, and musical instruments can all have therapeutic effects. Give yourself permission to playfully explore these helpful tools. Quartz crystal “singing” bowls have become one of the most sought after sonic tools in the world. They are potent healing instruments that produce pure, penetrating tones and induce deep relaxation. The quartz crystals amplify, store, focus, transfer, and transmute energy. They are advocated by medical experts, such as Andrew Weil, MD, a renowned leader in integrative medicine. Traditional Chinese medicine doctors, Reiki masters, massage therapists, healers and energy practitioners are incorporating crystal singing bowls into their practices. Hearing the enchanting song of the crystal bowls seems to awaken an ancient remembering, touching the essence of the soul.

10: Enjoy a Sound Therapy Session—“This sound elixir will shift your state of being!” (PB, Victoria) Each healing sound session is as unique as you are, depending on your needs. It may include time to discuss your healing goals, a “sonic massage” with dozens of **Alchemy quartz crystal bowls**, drums, native flute, overtone chanting, recorded nature sounds and **Reiki**. You'll lie comfortably, fully clothed, and quickly slip into a serene, meditative state that is profoundly healing. You also can learn to play the crystal bowls or use your voice to balance your chakras. Clients often see dramatic relief after one session, but usually it takes a series to bring your body back into lasting balance.

Nancy Watters is a gifted sound healer, Registered Clinical Counsellor, Reiki Master and enchanting vocalist with 25 years of experience in human services. She is known internationally for her angelic chants that blend with the luminous sound of Alchemy Quartz Crystal Bowls. Since 1996 she has been studying with specialists from Aboriginal, Buddhist, Bahá’í, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Sufi traditions. She weaves healing soundscapes that people describe as “otherworldly”. These mysterious, soul-stirring sounds shift you into states of consciousness normally achieved only through years of meditation practice. Nancy welcomes the opportunity to lead sound healing events at your location, at your convenience.

Contact nancy@luminous-tones.com to purchase Alchemy™ crystal singing bowls or book a session.

www.Luminous-Tones.com