

## Cool Tunes Ease Cold Weather Blues

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Sally Fletcher, a professional harpist and author on the healing power of music, suggests ways to use music to cope with depression and negative emotions during the gloomy winter months. Researchers support the mood enhancing qualities of music.

Sally Fletcher, a professional harpist and author on the healing power of music, suggests ways to use music to cope with depression and negative emotions during the gloomy winter months. "Music has often been used to relieve stress, enhance mood and create a general sense of well being," says Fletcher. "It affects emotions, which have been shown to have a profound impact on physiology, including heart rate, breathing and blood pressure." The growing healthcare field of Music Therapy is often associated with stress management programs, relaxation, pain management and to promote wellness.

A [symposium at Stanford's Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics](#) last year focused on the therapeutic benefits of musical rhythm. Researchers suggest that rhythmic music may affect brain function and treat a range of neurological conditions such as depression, bringing lasting benefits to one's state of mind, even when no longer listening to the music.

Fletcher believes that harp music is well-suited to provide these benefits. The harp is a harmonic instrument that allows the harpist to play a wide variety of music, styles, textures and accompaniments rather than melodies only. However, the choice of music is very personal and needs to suit the individual. Whatever the choice of instrumentation and musical style, she suggests that people begin their listening sessions with music that has a fairly slow and relaxing tempo, gradually adding selections with a more rapid tempo. "The music will become a stimulant," continues Fletcher, "that increases the production of endorphins, energizes and quickens brain activity and helps the listener to focus and think more clearly."

Fletcher is pleased that people who listen to her music, both those for whom she performs live harp performances and those who listen to her CDs, regularly write to her about the mood enhancing qualities of her music. "I encourage everyone to embrace this effective, low cost way to ease depression and stress," she continues, "especially during the winter season when higher rates of depression are often reported."

Sally Fletcher is a professional harpist and author of "The Challenge of Epilepsy" on her personal experiences with the healing power of music. She knows what it is like to be diagnosed with a supposedly incurable disorder. However, she has been seizure-free with no medication for 18 years, and is an advocate and inspirational speaker on the subject of music therapy to aid healing and promote well-being.

**Source: Heavenly Harpist**

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