

SINGING IS GOOD FOR YOU - IT'S OFFICIAL

Group therapy, physical therapy, art therapy - move over! Singing is taking a growing position among health care prescriptions in the UK.



Decades of research internationally has proved an unequivocal link between singing and well-being, both physical and psychological. The ten top health benefits are:

- lower blood pressure
- greater lung capacity
- more energy
- relief from asthma
- elevated mood
- improved memory
- increased concentration
- better posture
- stronger stomach muscles
- toned facial muscles.

A study conducted by the University of Frankfurt (2005) has revealed that singing protects the upper respiratory system from getting infected, and stimulates the production of antibodies. Singing also serves to demonstrate the health and well being of the person. As many as 31 amateur singers were studied before these conclusions were drawn.

'Singing is similar to meditation and walking in terms of its positive effects on health', said Gunter Kreutz, the leader of the study.

'People who sing regularly can improve their breathing, increase their supply of oxygen, stimulate their circulation and get their bodies energized', said Professor Wolfram Seidner of the University Clinic Charite in Berlin.

Heart Research UK (2009) reports that Professor Graham Welch, Chair of Music Education at the Institute of Education, University of London, who has studied developmental and medical aspects of singing for 30 years says,

“The health benefits of singing are both physical and psychological. Singing has physical benefits because it is an aerobic activity that increases oxygenation in the blood stream and exercises major muscle groups in the upper body, even when sitting. Singing has psychological benefits because of its normally positive effect in reducing stress levels through the action of the endocrine system which is linked to our sense of emotional well-being. Psychological benefits are also evident when people sing together as well as alone because of the increased sense of community, belonging and shared endeavour.”

The Daily Mail (7th June 2010) reports that in a recent Swedish study singing has been shown to increase the levels of the feel-good hormone oxytocin which may also have a painkilling effect and thereby ease the symptoms of eg irritable bowel syndrome.

There is increasing evidence from a range of sources of recognised research that there are strong links between Singing and Health and general well-being. No matter at what level you sing the evidence is that it is good for you - it makes you feel good and it might well be improving your general health and thus increasing your life expectancy.

We are particularly fortunate that there are a lot of musical groups operating in the Lancaster District and that means that there are lots of opportunities to become involved. Local singing groups will welcome new members with open arms even if you consider that you are not a good singer or not a singer at all! You will find groups to suit all tastes - ladies choirs, male voice choirs, mixed choral groups - singing a whole range of music.

So, why not give it a try? You might surprise yourself how good you feel after you've had a really good sing.....

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Information Leaflet compiled in 2010 by:

Lancaster and District Male Voice Choir
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