

Music To Get You Moving

It is a well known fact that music can affect how we feel. Numerous studies have shown that it can influence our emotions and thinking.

It is also common knowledge that music can be used to create or foster a particular atmosphere – eg, by adding suspense to a thriller movie or romance to a candle lit dinner and so on.

Given this, it is not surprising that music can be used to motivate and energise people undertaking fitness activities. Many who have experimented with music while fitness training can attest to this. Music can “drive” group exercise classes and music videos or Ipod music can help individuals get into and stay in their own energetic workout groove.

Studies support this finding that music can help motivate and sustain people during their fitness activities. A Canadian study in 2005 for example found that obese participants who exercised to music were more likely to follow the exercise program and lose weight than those who participated in the study and exercised without music. In another 2005 study in the U.S. it was found that those who exercised to music enjoyed their exercise sessions more than those who exercised without music. As a result those exercising with music were more motivated to exercise and exercised for longer than those who had no music, thus achieving greater fitness gains.

The fitness industry has known about and used the motivating power of music for a long time. Since the aerobics days of the '70s upbeat music has been used in group fitness classes, and many other fitness and sport training activities have been accompanied by loud, 'get you moving and keep you moving' music as a matter of course.

Not only that, the use of music by the fitness industry has, and continues to be, well thought out and orchestrated. Warm up music for example is normally calculated to run at about 125-135 beats per minute. It aims to warm up people's bodies and moods at the same time, priming them for more energetic exercise. Post warm up music for higher intensity aerobic conditioning exercises is deliberately faster paced. It encourages people to exercise harder and normally runs at about 130-160 beats per minute. Music for muscle conditioning exercises may be a little slower than this because effective strength work involves slower movements, and cool down music is generally slower again as it is aimed at relaxing participants back down to a normal heart rate level. Such cool down music may run at about 110-120 beats per minute.

Individuals who use music to motivate and energise themselves during their fitness activities self select their music. Often however, they choose music with a steady, consistent beat and positive or inspiring lyrics. Such a choice is often akin to the type of music chosen by fitness centres and group fitness leaders for aerobic conditioning type exercises.

If you are looking for something to help motivate you and keep you moving for longer then try exercising with music. Whether it's in a group exercise class, a gym or outdoors with an Ipod, some energising music may be just what you need.