

Benefits of Singing

Choral Canada is the National Arts Service Organization for the Canadian choral arts sector and community. Its recent National Choral Census (2017) confirms that 3.5 million Canadians sing in 28,000 choirs from coast to coast to coast. Focusing on why group singing should matter to all Canadians, this campaign highlights some of the ways that singing together can contribute to our overall health and wellbeing.



READ MORE about the #BenefitsOfSinging and find curated research that validates and corroborates these benefits at ChoralCanada.org

PHYSICAL BENEFITS OF SINGING



HEART

Singing regulates heart and circulatory system

Singing regulates blood pressure, increases oxygenation in the blood, and reduces heart rate variability.



LUNGS

Singing improves lung and respiratory function

Singing involves deep controlled breathing and has been proven to improve lung function. In fact, medical professionals advocate for the use of singing as a therapy for individuals with breathing difficulties!



IMMUNITY

Singing triggers the immune system

Group singing has been shown to trigger the immune system. In particular, a growing body of literature confirms the role of group singing on increased production of immunoglobulin A, an antibody that is essential to fighting disease.



COMMUNICATION

Singing supports communication rehabilitation

Singing can strengthen aspects of productive and receptive communication in individuals. While anyone can benefit from proper breath and vocal support, these practices are particularly valuable for disorders such as aphasia, stuttering, Parkinson's disease, lung disease, and hearing loss. (See, for example, our colleagues at SingWell)

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL BENEFITS OF SINGING



IDENTITY

Singing strengthens individual and cultural identity

Singing programs have found success in increasing feelings of competence, self-esteem, and confidence in singers. Engaging in song creates a platform for self-expression in individual people and provides insight into social and cultural group membership. Singing together helps Indigenous youth reconnect with their cultural identity.



WELLBEING

Singing improves quality of life

Group singing has been shown to contribute to psychological well-being and personal development. Many studies over the decades have documented singing-related improvements in quality of life.



COMMUNITY BUILDING

Singing fosters social connectedness and belonging

Group singing has been shown to rapidly build social connections and generate a collective identity. Simply put, individuals who sing/breathe/move together, feel together. In fact, some theorists claim that one evolutionary purpose of group singing is social bonding.



SOCIAL SKILLS

Singing increases prosocial behaviours and cooperation

A growing body of research demonstrates that singing together leads to more prosocial behaviours such as helping, sharing, and cooperating. This prosocial effect is found even in infancy!



EMPOWERMENT

Singing empowers marginalized communities and stigmatized individuals

Extensive scholarship has explored the ways in which stigmatized individuals experience positive outcomes such as community and/or empowerment through choral singing. Studies also show that group singing is an effective means of raising consciousness on important social issues faced by under-represented populations.

PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF SINGING



BRAIN

Singing stimulates brain function

Participating in any musical activity, including singing, is a powerful way to stimulate the brain. Singing has been shown to activate and connect different regions of the brain, including those involved in memory, thinking, movement, attention, language, and emotion.



STRESS RELIEF

Singing decreases stress

Whether singing in a community choir or belting it out solo in the shower, singing appears to be an effective stress-reliever. Research substantiates not only that people feel more relaxed after a singing session, but also that singing can actually decrease levels of salivary cortisol, a hormone best known as the stress hormone.



PAIN RELIEF

Singing increases pain threshold

Studies verify that people can tolerate more pain after singing with others. Resilience is gained through group bonding. Some researchers think this phenomenon has to do with pain-relieving endorphins that are released during group singing.



MOOD BOOSTER

Singing boosts mood

There is evidence that singing, especially in a group, can help individuals manage their emotional state and boost mood. Singing can alter mood immediately after participation in a short singing session, and some of these effects are still evident one week later.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS OF SINGING



MEMORY

Singing facilitates learning and memory

Singing is a highly effective way to learn and remember items of information. It is easy to remember the alphabet, a phone number, or passages of a foreign language when they are in a song!



FOCUS

Singing increases attention in the classroom

While scientists are still investigating whether singing can improve non-musical skills, singing in the classroom has been found to increase student engagement and attention.



LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Singing supports language learning

Songs and movement are excellent tools for introducing and reinforcing pre-reading skills, and these experiences significantly enhance the effectiveness of language and literacy programs.



MUSICIANSHIP

Singing helps develop an understanding of music

Group singing develops an understanding of musical concepts and elements, including form, rhythm, timbre, pitch, texture, dynamics, phrasing, and more, so that artistry and musical expression can be realized. Aural skills are developed along with musical memory and thinking in sound.

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