



We're tuning into how sound can help

heal & relax

By Jennifer Walsh

There is a big difference between noise and sound. The word noise is used when a sound is too loud or annoying. Think of the whizzing of the firetrucks or people screaming at one another. Sounds are usually described when you hear something lovely or joyful or interesting.

When you put that into context it may come as no surprise that sound has become big business for the wellness industry. Do you remember the machines from years ago that would play different nature sounds that acted as white noise to aid in sleeping or relaxing? Well, they still exist and they were the early iterations of what is now backed in science and are more in tune (pun intended), with frequency and vibration.

So, what does that mean exactly? Quite simply, it's that certain sounds at specific vibrational frequencies can be helpful and beneficial to our health by bringing a sense of balance and calm.



Music Is Wellness

The Global Wellness Institute recently released its findings on this subject. The big news: Major streaming music sites (Spotify, Amazon, Apple, etc.) are ramping up their music for well-being content, essentially making "wellness" a new listening channel. In addition, more and more artists are experimenting with creating music that heals; meditation apps are becoming full-blown record labels; and radical new technologies, including "generative" music platforms that create an always-unfolding healing soundscape based on your



biometrics, are poised to emerge out of the start-up lab and onto big media platforms.

Whether focusing on self-care, pain management, or healing and wellness, music or sound therapy is a great addition to your routine and is easy to access.

Where To Look

Don't know where to start? The best way is to tap into YouTube videos that offer binaural beats, which is when the left and right ear receive slightly different frequencies of sound but the brain registers them as a single sound. The difference between those two frequencies is called the binaural beat—a frequency that your conscious mind is unaware of.

Sound baths—the process of "bathing" in the sound that is around you—have exploded in popularity over the past five years. These can be accessed through apps but there is nothing quite like experiencing it in person. Lucky for us, studios have popped up all over the country, including many yoga studios.

How it works:

A sound bath practitioner will play different bowls, tuning forks, or gongs as you and/or your group lie comfortably on the floor. The frequencies you receive are different from the person next to you and will interact with your personal vibration and frequencies, allowing your body to relax and become energized.

Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health offers programs in-person and online that involve sound. Rudra Bach, vibrational sound therapist at Kripalu, sings the praises of a high-quality sound bath. Among its benefits: Stabilizing the nervous system.

"I have found that there is often a more mysterious and deeply personal effect on the listener. Throughout time, cultures have

been drawn toward harmonic sounds as a way to elevate the spirit, clear the mind, and center the heart," Rudra explains. "When skillfully performed, an ambient soundscape moving around and through the body can become a life-shifting experience."

We "hear" these sound ideas are also top-notch



"*Alexa, help me relax...*" Amazon Echo Studio is one of the most popular providers of at-home sound therapies. You can ask Alexa to enable Headspace, ocean sounds, healing sounds, relaxing sounds, and so many others. This device is equipped with five speakers that produce powerful bass, dynamic midrange, and crisp highs. The Dolby Atmos technology adds space, clarity, and depth. Simply ask Alexa to play meditation music and adjust the volume to your liking. \$199.99, [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Quiet the mind. MindTravel is a sound experience that takes place both in a live setting and via virtual events. The brainchild of composer and pianist, Murray Hidary, MindTravel was an opportunity for him to share his gift of sound to many in a unique way. The in-person experiences are real-time compositions that are beamed directly into the MindTravel headphones of those in attendance. These innovative experiences take places on walks, at museums, underwater, and more. Prices vary, [MindTravel.com](https://www.MindTravel.com)

Get outside

One of the best—and free—sound therapies is time spent in nature. Listening to rain, the crashing waves of the ocean, and rustling leaves are also great for healing. Listening to natural sounds reduces stress, boosts mood, and is correlated with positive well-being. Spend some time in your backyard (if you have one) or go to your local park and just listen to the sounds that fill the air, notice what they are, close your eyes, and take a few minutes to truly tune into the natural world around you. It's even fun to try this with your little ones as a mindful meditative practice.

No matter where you go to find sound therapies, it's definitely worth a try. Never underestimate the power of the sound of a roaring fire this fall and winter.



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