



Music Therapy for PALS and CALS

Music therapy is clinical, evidence-based use of music to accomplish individual non-musical goals. Music therapy has been found beneficial for [psychological wellbeing](#) (Davies et al., 2016) and for [decreasing perception of physical symptoms](#) of the disease, [increasing communication](#) and [improving quality of life](#) (Raglio et al., 2016) of people with ALS. Music listening may have a [beneficial effect on heart rate, respiratory rate, and anxiety](#) in mechanically ventilated patients (Bradt et al., 2010).

Benefits of music therapy for PALS and CALS:

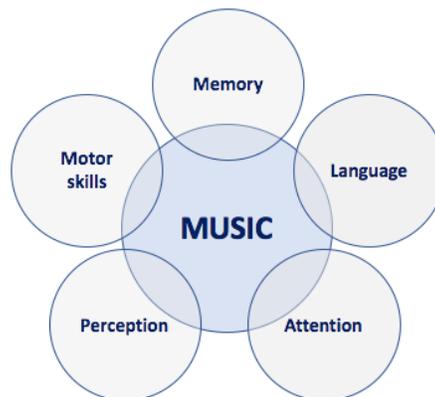
- psychological support and counseling
- relaxation and sleep facilitation
- self-expression (verbal or nonverbal)
- mood enhancement
- energy boost
- moderate physical exercise
- mild respiratory training
- pain management
- support for making decisions
- support for adjustment to the disease
- enhancing family dynamics
- community building
- respite care

Music therapy may look and sound like:

- instrumental or vocal improvisation
- singing songs
- playing simple music instruments
- listening to live or recorded music
- songwriting
- discussing favorite music
- creating play lists
- music-supported visualizations
- exercising to music
- dancing to music
- music-evoked reminiscing
- vocal or breathing exercises
- drawing to music

Who can practice music therapy? Music therapy is an [allied health profession](#), like physical therapy or speech therapy. Music therapists hold a degree in music therapy; in most countries, they also have to be board certified or licensed to practice. Music therapists have theoretical and practical knowledge of music, human psychology and physiology, and work closely with a multidisciplinary team to provide individualized, evidence-based treatment for every clinical situation. Volunteers, caregivers and patients cannot practice music therapy, but can be trained in [therapeutic applications of music](#) for particular, simpler purposes.

Since the 1990ies, [neurologic music therapy](#) has been used worldwide in rehabilitation of stroke and TBI survivors to improve their gait, gross and fine motor skills, balance, speech, swallowing, and emotional regulation. The success of this treatment is rooted in [neuroplasticity](#) and in the fact that [music shares neural pathways with other vital processes](#) (such as speech production or movement). These findings inform our ongoing [research on the effect of neurologic music therapy protocol on bulbar and respiratory functions of people living with ALS](#).



If music therapy for ALS may be of interest to you, visit <http://alsmusictherapy.org> or send us a message at Alisa.Apreleva@pgr.anglia.ac.uk

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