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'Singing is good for you' diagram based on the work of Milton Mermikides from Williams: 'Teaching Singing to Children and Young Adults', Compton Publishing Ltd., October 2012.



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IT'S OFFICIAL SINGING IS GOOD FOR YOU!



For years singers and singing teachers have been reporting anecdotal accounts suggesting that singing is good for health and wellbeing. Finally research is providing us with evidence to support their findings.



WORLD VOICE DAY

APRIL 16th

Singing makes you feel good: Recent studies show that singing has a significant effect on people's sense of wellbeing ^[1,2]. Questionnaires show that people who sing regularly report higher levels of emotional stability and wellbeing even when suffering from mental health problems such as chronic depression and schizophrenia ^[3].

Singing improves your health: Singing has been shown to have a positive effect on our immune systems, helping us to ward off disease ^[4]. It affects our heart rates; choirs have been shown to synchronise their heart and breathing rates, increasing and decreasing them in response to the music ^[5]. It also appears to help reduce high blood pressure ^[6]. Singing improves our breath control, even for people with lung conditions such as asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) ^[7].

Patients suffering from neurological conditions such as Parkinson's disease, stroke and dementia have all been shown to benefit from regular singing in terms of communication, sociability, reduction in aggression and improved mood ^[8,9].

Singing improves confidence and self perception: One of the most valued benefits noticed by singers in these studies is that of improved self confidence and self worth ^[10,11]. Singing in a group particularly helps people with low self esteem develop friendships which can impact positively on their social and work lives ^[12].

Singing and brain development: Advances in technology have allowed us to see directly how singing and music affect the brain. During singing and exposure to music, complex connections occur throughout the brain ^[13]. Accessing these broad connections regularly through singing/music appears to boost creativity and our ability to solve problems ^[14].

Singing for children's educational development: Children singing in choirs have improved self-esteem and sense of social inclusion ^[15]. There is also a direct causal link related to the acquisition of fine-motor skills, memorisation abilities, the expression of emotion and the rewards of group activity ^[16]. Singing has important implications for children's education ^[17].

So, if maybe you need a boost, why not consider getting out there and singing?

It does not matter what genre you prefer and you don't need to be experienced. Many groups welcome anyone prepared to try, even those who have been told they are 'tone deaf' in the past.

You can find a local choir by carrying out an internet search or, alternatively, your local library can do this for you. Whatever your tastes in music might be, you are likely to find something that suits you.

We've included some suggestions below to help you get started.

Examples of some useful national websites include:

- BBC - Sing**
www.bbc.co.uk/sing/findachoir.shtml
- British Association of Barbershop Singers**
www.singbarbershop.com
- British Choirs on the Net**
www.choirs.org.uk
- Gerontius**
www.gerontius.net
- Making Music**
www.makingmusic.org.uk
- National Association of Choirs**
www.nationalassociationofchoirs.org.uk
- Rock Choir**
www.rockchoir.com
- Royal Choral Society**
www.royalchoralsociety.co.uk

Examples of local choirs around the country include:

- Invidia Voices – Rock and Soul Choir (Norfolk)** www.invidiavoices.co.uk, **Avon Harmony – Ladies Acappella Chorus (Avon)** www.avonharmony.co.uk, **Heartbeat Chorus – Women's Barbershop Chorus (Stockport)** www.heartbeatchorus.com, **Lace City Chorus (Nottingham)** www.lacecity.net, **Voice of The Town – Contemporary (Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Newcastle)** www.voiceofthetown.co.uk, **London Youth Gospel Choir** www.lygc.org.uk, **Popchoir (London, Essex and Kent)** www.popchoir.com, **Express Yourself Show Tunes Choir (Worcester)** www.expressyourselfchoir.com, **20000 Voices (the North East)** www.20000voices.org.

