



Why Play a Guitar (or any Instrument)?

A new Scottish study says if you play the guitar—or any musical instrument, for that matter—you're more likely to have sharper brain function, which can help guard against mental decline in the future. Open a songbook and study up.

Researchers from the Netherlands found that patients who practiced music for more than 100 minutes a day showed a significant drop in blood pressure and a lower heart rate than those who didn't.

Just carrying a guitar case can seriously boost the odds of women wanting you—even if they're total strangers, finds recent research in *Psychology of Music*. How come? Studies show women associate musical ability with intelligence, commitment, hard work, and physical prowess—and ladies associate all those qualities with your ability to earn money, the researchers say.

Israeli researchers recently sent friendship requests from a good-looking guy to 100 attractive, single women. In half the requests, the guy was holding a guitar. In the other half, he wasn't. Only 5 of 50 women accepted a friendship request from the guitar-less guy, while the man with the axe scored 14 attractive new "friends," according to the study. The reason: Musical ability is linked to manliness.

Researchers from Michigan State University found that musicians who picked up an instrument at an early age and continued nurturing their craft throughout adulthood had a better chance of launching successful invention—logging patents, building businesses, and publishing pieces.

According to a Cambridge University study, musicians continue being creative even when they're not playing their instruments. Researchers found that performers visualize music in terms of its shape, and then process that as a form of practice. Most don't see it as such, but it's a highly creative way of learning.