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## Singing For the Soul

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There's nothing that can't be made better by singing in a choir. Give me a problem and it'll seem less worrying after a good sing. Give me happy news and song will only serve to make me feel more joyful. Singing is the ultimate tonic, and put a group of singers in a room - pow - that's a whole cocktail of happiness right there.



The undeniable smiles of singers

Music rewards you for making it. I'm not a scientist, but plenty of people who are have told of the chemical benefits to the body - endorphins that serve to eliminate pain, stress causing cortisol levels being slashed, serotonin levels helping to boost the immune system and dopamine, associated with alertness and pleasure. If you've ever sung

in a choir, you don't need to be a scientist to know all of this to be true. Singing is good for you because it feels good.

Why limit singing to the shower when the benefits are magnified when singing with others? Singing in a choir releases an extra chemical, oxytocin, that is magnified by sharing the sound with others. And the outcome? Anxiety and stress are busted, and bonds and trust amplified. Some even report that our heart beats become synchronised when singing in a group - a tribe-like side-effect of an already powerful medicine.



Singing creates harmony in more ways than one

Is it a coincidence that the word harmony, used in a musical sense to denote a combination of notes sounded together, also means an agreement in feeling or opinion, a coherent whole? When we sing, not only do our voices become one but our sentiment does too! It's no wonder that there is now an estimated 25,000 choirs in the UK alone, and singing is proving itself to be one of the nation's favourite pastimes. But singing isn't simply a hobby - thousands of workplaces

now have in-house workplace choirs and activities built into both work and play. Here, singing breaks boundaries, connects, energises and relieves stress, valuable counterparts to any team.



Singing breeds joy in togetherness

Is there anything singing can't do? It may not cure disease but it can speed up the healing process. It may not end wars but it can ease tension, encourage dialogue and create a platform for communication. It won't solve every problem, but it can help your mind and body get in the best shape to tackle the demons. As a choir member once told us, singing should be on available on prescription. Until then, get singing wherever you are and reap the benefits!

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