

FITNESS





# Your Playlist Is Your Ultimate Training Partner

by Ashley Mateo

Have you ever been about to start a workout, only to realize you left your headphones at home? If that made you throw in the towel, you're not alone—65 percent of people said they'd have “no motivation” to exercise without their workout music of choice in a 2021 survey commissioned by RockMyRun and conducted by OnePoll.

Humans are wired to move to music—it activates the cerebellum, the part of the brain that coordinates movement and stores physical memory. And **it can improve athletic performance** in two ways: by either delaying fatigue or increasing work capacity.

That makes music an incredibly powerful motivator, with significant physiological and psychological payoffs—and the **Technogym Live** interface allows you to directly tap into those benefits. Log into Spotify or Apple Music to play your own tunes, or pull up the Technogym Playlists, a curated selection of pop, house, rock, and electronic hits.

Next time you're looking to level up your fitness, just press play.







## Get Motivated

You know how pro athletes have walkout songs? It's not just about hyping up the crowds of spectators, it's about setting the athletes up for success.

Music can act as an ergogenic aid, something that **increases energy and performance** no matter the sport. Runners who listened to fast or slow music before completing a 5K improved their initial speed over the first 800 meters, which made them more likely to achieve a better performance across the full distance, research published in *The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* found.

The same effect applies in the gym. When people listened to music for three minutes—that's just one song!—before performing bench press reps, they showed **increased power output, barbell velocity, and motivation** compared to those who sat in silence before picking up any weight, a small study published in 2021 in the journal *Perceptual and Motor Skills* determined. And listening to music while rowing at 50 percent of max heart rate improved subsequent performance in a 2,000-meter time trial compared with no music, a 2020 study in that same journal found.

These studies show that you don't even need to keep your headphones in for the duration of your workout to see a performance boost. But if you do, you'll see even more benefits.

# Run or Ride Faster

Running and cycling are repetitive sports—whether you're striking the ground or pushing your pedals, it's always right foot, left foot, again and again. By aligning those movements with the tempo of a song, you can push or pull back your pace.

A song's tempo is determined by its beats per minute (bpm), and that bpm can influence your cadence, AKA the number of steps per minute you take as you run or the number of revolutions your pedals make per minute as you ride. On the treadmill, **music between 123 and 131 bpm led to the best performance**, research published in *Psychology of Sport and Exercise* found, while the ideal tempo for cycling performance is between 125 and 140 bpm, according to a study published in *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*.

This is old news—researchers determined all the way back in 1911 that cyclists pedaled faster while a band was playing than when it was silent. In 2023, though, a study in the *European Journal of Sport Science* showed that listening to a beat that's faster than your preferred cadence not only improves it in the moment, but for three to five weeks afterwards.

It's not just about your speed, though. Running to upbeat music **improved performance when people felt mentally fatigued** in a 2021 study published in the *Journal of Human Sport and Exercise*, and **reduced the perceived effort involved**, according to a 2020 study published in *Frontiers in Psychology*. And cyclists who listened to music while doing sprint intervals improved their peak and mean power were higher over the course of the exercise session, research from *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* determined.





## Lift Heavier

If the standard weight room soundtrack of grunts and shouts isn't enough to make you want to cover your ears, the fact that the right music can translate directly into gains should do the trick.

When elite weightlifters listened to music during their training, 89 percent improved the quality of their training, with 97 percent increasing the volume, and 98 percent increasing the intensity, older research published in *Perceptual and Motor Skills* found.

But it's not just about whatever song is pumping over the gym's loudspeaker. When weightlifters listened to their preferred music compared to music they didn't choose, they **increased the amount of bench press** reps they could perform by 3.9 percent and demonstrated more power with each rep, according to a 2018 study published in *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*. Similarly, when exercisers got to choose their favorite music, they **produced higher maximal strength, performed more repetitions of the lat-pulldown exercise, and reported decreased rate of perceived exertion** in a 2020 study published in *Perceptual and Motor Skills*.

Take the weights away, and the benefits still stand: Listening to your favorite music was shown to increase jump squat take-off velocity in an older study from the *The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*.

What music won't do in the weight, several of the studies have found, is increase the maximum amount of weight you can lift in a single go. It's likely because music works best on repetitive motions, like banging out bench press reps to failure. When it comes to those brute strength tests, unplug and focus on the task at hand.

## Recover Sooner

There are so many high-tech recovery options today, could helping your body repair and rebuild really be as simple as cueing up some good tunes?

Listening to slower music post-exercise was shown to **lower blood pressure and pulse rate more quickly** than listening to fast or no music does, research from the *Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology* reported, while another small study published in the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* determined that listening to music during a post-run recovery walk caused the participants' blood lactate levels to drop more rapidly than not listening to music—they also reported that recovery felt less demanding.

In the same way uptempo music hypes you up, switching over to a more soothing playlist post-workout can bring down your heart rate quickly and avoid a cortisol spike, smoothing the way for more rapid, effective gains, researchers at Brunel University have found.

Plus, people reported enjoying a workout more afterward when they listened to music, a 2019 study published in the journal *Psychology of Sport & Exercise* found. And the more you enjoy a workout, the more likely you are to get back to it sooner rather than later.