



Have you ever wondered if listening to music while training is actually helping or hindering your results? Many athletes throw on their headphones and crank up the volume during training. For many, it helps pass the time. After all, not all training is fun. Some also use it to be motivated or keep up the pace. Although there may be some benefits to moving with the music, there may be more reasons to train music free. Here is a list of 7 reasons why you should unplug.

## 1. Don't Sabotage Your Race

Train every day like it is race day. Many races don't allow the use of music during the event so when you listen to music while training, you put yourself at a disadvantage. I did this for years and when it came to race day, it felt like I was in new territory- because I was. If you want to set yourself up for success, match your training to the conditions of race day, including what your ears hear.

## 2. Protect Your Assets

That is, protect yourself! If you are out there on a training ride or run and paying attention to music, you aren't paying attention to what's around you. Approaching traffic (particularly the drivers staring at their phone), wildlife or that unleashed dog, or a faster cyclist trying to pass are all possible threats that you need to pay attention to. Put the odds in your favor, take the headphones off and keep safe!

## 3. Listen to Your Body

Listen to yourself run sometime and you'll find your body gives you all kinds of information. Music is such a great distraction that it is quite easy to miss what it is telling you. Your breathing, cadence, and even pain can be in another dimension and you don't realize something is not right until you're done. If you want to get the most out of your training, pay attention to your body. That means opening up all your senses, including your hearing.

## 4. Train in the Right Zone

Training is very prescriptive. I promise you, coaches don't make you run slow for their own personal enjoyment. Every workout has a reason, and if you don't meet the objective of that workout, you are likely going to have less than optimal results. Listening to music during a workout can make you go too fast, too slow, or be all over the map. I have personally missed my heart rate monitor telling me to slow down just simply not hearing it due to music. Focus on the purpose for the workout and don't let anything distract you from it.

## 5. Breathing With Purpose

There is more to breathing than just, well, breathing. There is literature out there that talks about matching your breathing to your strides in certain ways, making you more efficient at oxygen exchange and can actually reduce your risk for injury. When you are listening to music, you are more likely to naturally match your breathing with the rhythm of the music, not your stride. Just think how hard it will be to breathe on race day!

## 6. No More Excuses

Motivation to train can be draining. We all have days where we will find any excuse not to do our workout. When I ran a lot with music, I actually had days where I got fully dressed in my running gear, realized I didn't have my mp3 player, and decided not to run do to that single barrier. Remove your dependency on music and you remove one more barrier to your training. An added bonus is that it's one less thing to pack.

## 7. Enjoy Your Training

I know – that's crazy talk! And before I stopped training cold turkey, you wouldn't have been able to convince me that I could enjoy it without the entertainment of music. I'll admit, it was rough at first. But after a couple weeks, I found that I actually enjoyed training at every speed more than I did before. I also found that I enjoyed interacting with the world around me (as corny as that sounds).

Are you convinced?

I hope you are. But if you decide to continue with the tunes, load your mp3 player with songs that have a beat of 90 beats per minute or slightly faster. At least that way you will benefit from good, consistent cadence. And why not give it a good try and see. You never know – it may just be the best thing you do for your training.