

Sweet Relief - 8 songs to soothe the flu

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A recent bout with the flu got me thinking about my one of my favorite medicines — music. The right song can be as comforting as your mother's chicken soup or a cozy down throw. Here are a few of my favorites. Many of these rise barely above a whisper. Play them while sipping hot tea or settling in for your third nap of the day. There are no jarring guitars or banging drums, just comforting vocals and understated accompaniments. Perhaps these soothing songs will provide some relief, or at least serve as a healing lullaby.

[Tiger Mountain Peasant Song](#) ^[2]— [Fleet Foxes](#) ^[3] Hailing from Seattle, the members of this five-piece band say they were raised on music by the Beach Boys, Bob Dylan, Buffalo Springfield and Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young. Many of their songs reflect those early influences through arrangements with layered harmonies. Some are sung as a round. Simple and sparse, Tiger Mountain Peasant Song is unlike the others. With only lead singer, Robin Pecknold's voice paired with gentle guitar picking, it sounds like a hymn and ends with a fade that reminds me of another of the band's influences, Simon and Garfunkel.

[Nightswimming](#) ^[4]— [R.E.M.](#) ^[5] has been around so long they are now releasing 25th anniversary CDs. This is from the Athens, Georgia band's 1992 release, "Automatic for the People." When R.E.M. first arrived on the scene, people used to sit around trying to guess what lead singer, Michael Stipe, was actually singing. There's nothing like that going on here. His voice is clear, calm and lovely accompanied by gorgeous piano playing from Mike Mills. "Nightswimming," tells of a group of friends who go skinny dipping. An oboe solo helps to conjure a tranquil night, "September is coming soon, pining for the moon" Stipe sings.

[Sailing to Philadelphia](#) ^[6]— [Mark Knopfler](#) ^[7] The former Dire Straits lead singer has had many excellent solo albums. This song is on the CD of the same name and is a duet between Knopfler and James Taylor telling the story of the men who drew the Mason-Dixon Line.

[I'll Fly Away](#) ^[8]— [Alison Krauss](#) ^[9] and [Gillian Welch](#) ^[10] When you're feeling like death warmed over a little something to transcend the pain can help. This well-loved, gospel song from the "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" soundtrack, brims with hope. Multi-Grammy winner Krauss and Welch harmonize beautifully when they croon "like a bird from these prison walls I'll fly." With the

plucky mandolin and cheerful guitar playing, for 3 minutes and 57 seconds you may forget you are sick.

Till it Shines ^[11] – Lyle Lovett ^[12] and Keb' Mo' ^[13] Lovett and Mo' paired up for this Bob Seger-penned song on the "Mumford" soundtrack. "Take the chip off my shoulder, smooth out all the lines. Take me out among the rustling pines." I'm sure they weren't meaning to sing to achy H1N1 patients, but it works. Put this one on repeat until your spirits lift, I do.

Common Threads ^[14] – Bobby McFerrin ^[15] McFerrin is so much more than the overplayed "Don't Worry Be Happy" that probably earned him a spot as a one-hit-wonder in many people's books. This song is from the 10-time Grammy award winner's 1990 recording, *Medicine Music*, and was also featured on the lullaby compilation "On a Starry Night." It's a comforting quilt of a song. What works for fussy babies, helps fussy grown-ups, too.

Crossing Muddy Waters ^[16] – John Hiatt ^[17] Hiatt is a master storyteller and songwriter whose songs have been recorded by artists such as Bonnie Raitt, B.B. King, Mandy Moore and Jimmy Buffett. *Crossing Muddy Waters*, from the CD of the same name, is a mournful story of a love lost but never sounds somber. Better than Tylenol or Motrin, I once cured a killer headache listening to the whole CD. I can always count on it to calm and comfort me.

When the Night Comes ^[18] – Dan Auerbach ^[19] An Akron, Ohio native, Auerbach is one half of the Black Keys, a garage rock band with a strong blues influence. Once again, this song is very different from the others on "Keep it Hid," Auerbach's 2009 solo CD. While most of the songs are rough-edged and raucous, this is serene. Fellow Ohioan Jessica Lea Mayfield's harmonies provide depth to this lonely song. When Auerbach sings, "When the night comes, And you lay your weary head to rest, No more trials, no tests," it sounds like sweet relief from a long day of misery. Don't miss the beautiful wind chimes at the end.

What's your favorite medicine music?

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