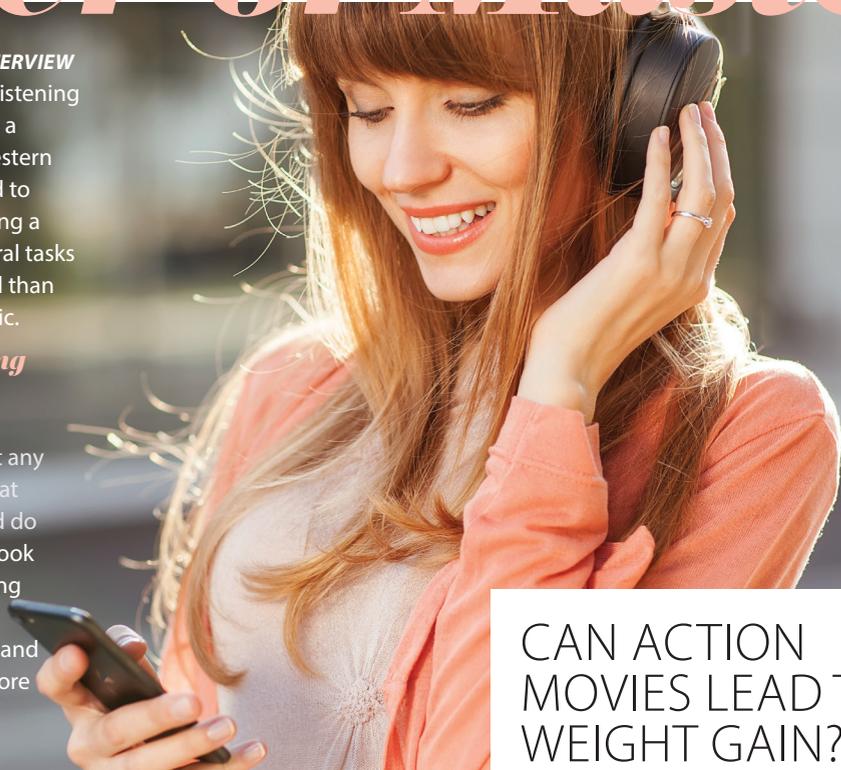


The Power of Music



NERVOUS ABOUT A MEETING, JOB INTERVIEW OR A BIG DATE? Amp yourself up by listening to your favorite song beforehand. In a recent study conducted by Northwestern University, participants who listened to a bass-heavy song before undertaking a series of psychological and behavioral tasks felt more confident and empowered than those who listened to low-bass music.

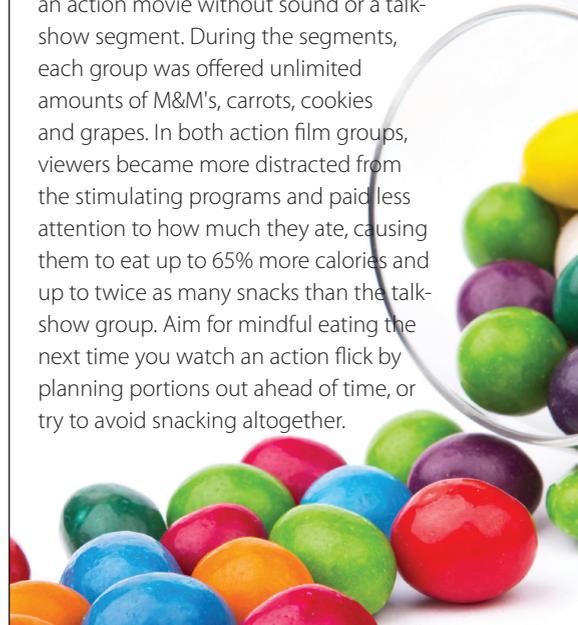
The top-rated power-boosting songs in the study included Queen's "We Will Rock You" and 2 Unlimited's "Get Ready for This," but any upbeat, high-bass song you love (that we hope is from this century) should do the trick. Next, researchers want to look into whether listening to empowering music can influence the outcome of marketing campaigns, negotiations and social perceptions. Stay tuned for more developments.



GIRL PHOTO: ROCK AND WASP/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM, CANDY PHOTO: VOROBIEVA/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

CAN ACTION MOVIES LEAD TO WEIGHT GAIN?

A Snacking during an action movie or fast-paced television program may cause you to overeat, according to a recent study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association Internal Medicine*. In the study, 94 American undergraduate students were divided into three groups and asked to watch a segment of an action movie with sound, an action movie without sound or a talk-show segment. During the segments, each group was offered unlimited amounts of M&M's, carrots, cookies and grapes. In both action film groups, viewers became more distracted from the stimulating programs and paid less attention to how much they ate, causing them to eat up to 65% more calories and up to twice as many snacks than the talk-show group. Aim for mindful eating the next time you watch an action flick by planning portions out ahead of time, or try to avoid snacking altogether.



Can Your Gut Flora Affect Your Mood?

A The gut is home to millions of living microbes, which are turning out to have a profound effect on behavior and health. These bacteria – which include “good guys” such as *Lactobacillus* and “bad guys” such as *Candida albicans* – are collectively called the **microbiome**, and they influence everything from digestive health to immunity to obesity. New research from Tufts University suggests that they may even be affecting our food choices, primarily via the vagus nerve, which connects 100 million cells from the digestive tract to the brain. The study found that microbes can influence our food choices and eating behavior to their benefit. “Microbes have the capacity to manipulate behavior and mood through altering the neural signals in the vagus nerve, changing taste receptors, producing toxins to make us feel bad and releasing chemical rewards to make us feel good,” said study co-author Athena Aktipis, PhD. But the good news is that by making healthier dietary choices we can alter our microbiota over time. Though it’s too early to make any specific recommendations, the research suggests that controlling our microbiota may be a practical approach to fighting obesity and poor eating habits. It’s also becoming clear that probiotics – the “good guys” of the microbiome – are an important part of maintaining a healthy gut. You can get probiotics in fermented foods such as sauerkraut, yogurt, kefir, tempeh and miso, and of course in high-quality probiotic supplements.