

English articles

It's useful to read articles in English, even if you don't understand every word - it will help you increase your vocabulary and keep up to date with things happening in English-speaking countries!

*This page will be updated on **Mondays**. The first article is aimed at a B1 and upwards level and the second article is aimed at a B2 and upwards level*

Articles of the week



US stocks rally toward more records ahead of pivotal week for Wall Street



NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks are climbing toward more records on Monday ahead of a week packed with potentially market-moving events for Wall Street.

The S&P 500 rose 0.8%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 210 points, or 0.4%, as of 9:35 a.m.

Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite was 1.3% higher. All are adding to their latest all-time highs set on Friday.

Stocks also rallied in Asia ahead of a meeting on Thursday between the heads of the United States and China. The hope is that the talks could clear rising tensions between the world's two largest economies and allow the global economy to keep motoring.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said there's "a framework" for U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping to discuss at their meeting, while Trump said, "We feel good" about working things out with China.

That's just one of many things that will need to go right this week in order for the U.S. stock market's tremendous, record-breaking rally to continue. The S&P 500 has shot up a stunning 37% since hitting a low in April, when worries about Trump's tariffs on China and other countries were at their peak. Besides hopes for easing trade tensions, the rally has also been built on expectations for several more things to happen.

One is that the Federal Reserve will keep cutting interest rates in order to give the slowing job market a boost. The Fed's next announcement on interest rates is due on Wednesday, and the nearly unanimous expectation among traders is that it will cut the federal funds rate by a quarter of a percentage point for a second straight meeting.

It's not a certainty though, because the Fed has also warned it may have to change course if inflation ends up accelerating beyond its still-high level. That's because low interest rates can make inflation worse.

The latest monthly report on inflation came in slightly better than economists expected, raising hopes, but it may be the final update for a while if the U.S. government's shutdown continues. That could cloud the forecast for cuts to rates to continue.

Besides low interest rates, another expectation that's propped up stock prices is the forecasts that U.S. companies will continue to deliver solid growth in profits.

Keurig Dr Pepper climbed 4.9% Monday after reporting profit for the latest quarter that matched analysts' expectations. The company behind the Canada Dry and Green Mountain coffee brands said it benefited from higher prices for K-Cup products, among other things

Some of Wall Street's most influential stocks are also set to report their latest results this upcoming week, including Alphabet, Meta Platforms and Microsoft on Wednesday, and Amazon and Apple on Thursday. They'll need to deliver big growth and justify big spending that's underway in artificial-intelligence technology.

Worries have been climbing that AI may be in the midst of a bubble, similar to the dot-com bonanza that ended up bursting in 2000.

In stock markets abroad, indexes were mixed in Europe amid mostly modest moves following bigger gains in Asia.

Stocks rose 1.2% in Shanghai and 1% in Hong Kong. They rose even more in Tokyo, where the Nikkei 25 jumped 2.5%, and in Seoul, where South Korea's Kospi rallied 2.6%.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury was holding steady at 4.02%, where it was late Friday.

AP Business Writers Matt Ott and Elaine Kurtenbach contributed.

Music could help ease pain from surgery or illness. Scientists are listening



By CHRISTINA LARSON AP Science Writer

Nurse Rod Salaysay works with all kinds of instruments in the hospital: a thermometer, a stethoscope and sometimes his guitar and ukulele.

In the recovery unit of UC San Diego Health, Salaysay helps patients manage pain after surgery. Along with medications, he offers tunes on request and sometimes sings. His repertoire ranges from folk songs in English and Spanish to Minuet in G Major and movie favorites like “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.”

Patients often smile or nod along. Salaysay even sees changes in their vital signs like lower heart rate and blood pressure, and some may request fewer painkillers.

“There’s often a cycle of worry, pain, anxiety in a hospital,” he said, “but you can help break that cycle with music.” Salaysay is a one-man band, but he’s not alone. Over the past two decades, live performances and recorded music have flowed into hospitals and doctors’ offices as research grows on how songs can help ease pain.

Scientists explore how music affects pain perception

The healing power of song may sound intuitive given music’s deep roots in human culture. But the science of whether and how music dulls acute and chronic pain — technically called music-induced analgesia — is just catching up.

No one suggests that a catchy song can fully eliminate serious pain. But several recent studies, including in the journals *Pain* and *Scientific Reports*, have suggested that listening to music can either reduce the perception of pain or enhance a person’s ability to tolerate it.

What seems to matter most is that patients — or their families — choose the music selections themselves and listen intently, not just as background noise.

How music can affect pain levels

“Pain is a really complex experience,” said Adam Hanley, a psychologist at Florida State University. “It's created by a physical sensation, and by our thoughts about that sensation and emotional reaction to it.”

Two people with the same condition or injury may feel vastly different levels of acute or chronic pain. Or the same person might experience pain differently from one day to the next.

Acute pain is felt when pain receptors in a specific part of the body — like a hand touching a hot stove — send signals to the brain, which processes the short-term pain. Chronic pain usually involves long-term structural or other changes to the brain, which heighten overall sensitivity to pain signals. Researchers are still investigating how this occurs.

“Pain is interpreted and translated by the brain,” which may ratchet the signal up or down, said Dr. Gilbert Chandler, a specialist in chronic spinal pain at the Tallahassee Orthopedic Clinic.

Researchers know music can draw attention away from pain, lessening the sensation. But studies also suggest that listening to preferred music helps dull pain more than listening to podcasts.

“Music is a distractor. It draws your focus away from the pain. But it's doing more than that,” said Caroline Palmer, a psychologist at McGill University who studies music and pain.

Scientists are still tracing the various neural pathways at work, said Palmer.

“We know that almost all of the brain becomes active when we engage in music,” said Kate Richards Geller, a registered music therapist in Los Angeles. “That changes the perception and experience of pain — and the isolation and anxiety of pain.”

Music genres and active listening

The idea of using recorded music to lessen pain associated with dental surgery began in the late 19th century before local anesthetics were available. Today researchers are studying what conditions make music most effective.

Researchers at Erasmus University Rotterdam in the Netherlands conducted a study on 548 participants to see how listening to five genres of music — classical, rock, pop, urban and electronic — extended their ability to withstand acute pain, as measured by exposure to very cold temperatures.

All music helped, but there was no single winning genre.

“The more people listened to a favorite genre, the more they could endure pain,” said co-author Dr. Emy van der Valk Bouman. “A lot of people thought that classical music would help them more. Actually, we are finding more evidence that what's best is just the music you like.”

The exact reasons are still unclear, but it may be because familiar songs activate more memories and emotions, she said. The simple act of choosing is itself powerful, said Claire Howlin, director of the Music and Health Psychology Lab at Trinity College Dublin, who co-authored a study that suggested allowing patients to select songs improved their pain tolerance.

“It's one thing that people can have control over if they have a chronic condition — it gives them agency,” she said. Active, focused listening also seems to matter.

Hanley, the Florida State psychologist, co-authored a preliminary study suggesting daily attentive listening might reduce chronic pain.

“Music has a way of lighting up different parts of the brain,” he said, “so you're giving people this positive emotional bump that takes their mind away from the pain.”

It's a simple prescription with no side effects, some doctors now say.

Cecily Gardner, a jazz singer in Culver City, California, said she used music to help get through a serious illness and has sung to friends battling pain.

“Music reduces stress, fosters community,” she said, “and just transports you to a better place.” ____
The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

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Last update: **2025/10/27 14:22**

