

ADVICE

EARWORMS EXPLAINED

OVER AND OVER AND OVER!

Do you find a song sometimes gets stuck in your head after listening to it just once?

According to statistics, 90% of people experience earworms, also called stuck song syndrome or involuntary musical imagery (INMI), on a weekly basis.

These involuntary mental replays typically last 15–30 seconds and scientists are beginning to understand more about them.

The most common reason

a song tends to become an earworm is “continuous repetition”, meaning the music repeats immediately and without delay.

Think of the children’s song Baby Shark, which repeats the phrase “doo doo doo doo doo”, or Kylie Minogue’s Can’t Get You Out of My Head with its “La-la-la-la-la-la-la, La-la-la-la-la-la-la”.

When your brain recalls music, it organises it into “packets” based on similarity and recognisability, says Professor Emery Schubert

from the University of New South Wales in Australia.

Musical triggers include songs with faster tempos and strong repetitive beats. Earworms can also be triggered by stress, boredom or environmental cues that remind you of a specific time or place.

So, how do you get an annoying earworm out of your head?

You could listen to or think about another specific, highly catchy song to overwrite the loop. Another option is to listen to the entire song (from start to finish), which gives the brain closure, allowing it to move on.

If that doesn’t work, try distraction by engaging your working memory in a different task that requires concentration, such as reading a book or doing a puzzle.



HEALTH NEWS

A NEW NAME FOR PCOS

After an extensive campaign of nearly 15 years, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) has been renamed poly-endocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome (PMOS).

The syndrome affects one in every eight women of reproductive age worldwide.

“There is much more to the syndrome than just ovarian cysts, and the

