

# Study: Love Can Stop the Pain

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Feelings of intense love can soothe your hurts, according to research from Stanford University and published in the journal [PloS ONE](#).

For the study, researchers scanned the brains of 15 deeply-in-love (they said) college students to determine the link between love and pain. (Eight were female and seven male.)

Researchers placed study participants through brain scanners that tracked the body's responses to pain caused by a heated probe placed on the palm of the hand. Then scientists studied the brain's pain response when participants performed three tasks: looked at the picture of an acquaintance, viewed a picture of their beloved, or engaged in a distracting verbal assignment (specifically, researchers asked students to name sports that don't use balls).

The results? Scientists found that participants who looked at the picture of a romantic partner reduced moderate pain by about 40 percent and relieved severe pain by 10 to 15 percent compared with viewing a picture of an acquaintance. In addition, researchers noted that the distracting assignment also provided similar pain-relieving effects, with one big difference. Scientists found that pain relief from love occurred along different brain pathways compared with relief from distraction.

So how does just looking at your beloved ease your pain? Viewing the object of your affection causes the body's dopamine system to interact with other brain systems that release natural painkillers (called opioids) in the body.

These study findings bolster the theory that patients could get pain relief from engaging in pleasurable pastimes. "Find things to give you pleasure in life, whether it be through the one you love, listening to great music or reading a good book," suggested Sean Mackey, MD, the study's lead study, revealing his advice to patients.

This research could also help doctors assess the condition of patients who find pain relief without popping pills or undergoing a procedure, Mackey said.

It's not OK to suffer with chronic pain. Click [here](#) to read how speaking up equals relief.

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