

Drumming Makes You Smarter!

Here is more evidence that participation in the arts benefits the mind and the spirit.

Music Education Leads to an Increase in Ones' IQ

NewsWireToday - /newswire/ - Akron, OH, United States, 02/03/2007 - Drumming increases heart rate and blood flow just like an aerobic exercise. Music education is imperative for brain power.

The process of drumming engages both the linear, (rational left brain) and the creative, (intuitive right brain). It slows the brain waves to around 8 cycles per second, the exact frequency of the earth.

Improved IQ scores can now officially be added to the growing list of benefits from playing drums. A recent study shows that playing the drums or other percussion instruments actually improves IQ scores of children. While previous studies have hinted that musical training improves a child's literacy and math skills, this is the first time that a study has shown that one's intelligence level can be improved by drumming.

Playing the drums makes the brain think in a way that very few activities can, said Pat Brown, International Drum Month chairman and Percussion Marketing Council co-executive director. Being able to understand musical notes and dissect how rhythms work and go together is a very complicated thought process. The most recent study shows that being constantly exposed to this type of brain activity can actually improve one's IQ level.

According to the study by E. Glenn Shallenberg at the University of Toronto, IQ test scores of 6-year-old children significantly improved after receiving drum lessons. Shallenberg recruited a group of 144 six (6) year olds and separated them into 4 groups: those receiving drum lessons, voice lessons, drama lessons and no lessons. Children receiving the drum lessons showed significant improvement in their IQ tests, gaining an average of 7 IQ points. Meanwhile, children receiving voice lessons increased 6 points, those receiving drama lessons increased 5 points and children receiving no lessons improved 4 points. In his article in Psychological Science, Shallenberg concluded that musical training, in particular, was responsible for the extra IQ points.

Among the other benefits of playing the drums are improved musical coordination and brain activity; physical therapy, and stress relief; improved social skills such as team work, self-esteem, discipline, improved abstract thought processes, a tool for creative expression, a balance for internal energy, life long enrichment, a great mood lifter, physical fitness, responsibility and a fun alternative to other less productive activities.

As drumming continues to remain one of the fastest growing segments within the musical instrument industry, the various benefits of drumming and percussion are increasing in visibility and validity. Drumming is also now gaining recognition among researchers and

scientists when it comes to serving as a therapeutic tool. We all know that percussion is a great outlet for letting off steam and exhibiting creative energy. Recent studies, however, have shown that percussion, and drumming in particular, can boost the immune system, which goes a long way towards reducing stress and improving one's health.

A USA Today article titled "The Rhythm of Life" noted a study led by neurologist Barry Bittman of the Mind-Body Wellness Center in Meadville, Pennsylvania. The study found that patients who took part in group drumming, or drum circles, experienced increased levels of disease fighting immune system cells, also known as natural killer cells. In an industry-sponsored study, Bittman tested the blood chemistry of 111 healthy people in a series of experiments. Bittman says participants in all groups experienced a drop in cortisol; an indicator of stress but only the group of active drummers had a significant increase in the natural killer cells.

As an explanation, Bittman attributes this difference to the stress reducing benefits of self-expression, camaraderie and rhythmic drumming. Sound waves have a profound effect on body cells. As an example, contemporary medical practices such as ultrasound used for healing scar tissue and reducing inflammation actually help the immune system produce more disease fighting cells. Thus, drumming or percussion activities can boost the immune system.

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