

10 Health Reasons to Start Drumming

The Health Benefits of Beating Your Own Drum

by Christiane Northrup, M.D.

Not long ago I watched a video on social media showing a room full of women in a guided drumming class drumming and moving to their beats. My first thought was “How fun! I want to do that!” I mean, who doesn’t want to feel like a rock star?

Cardio drumming classes, such as Drums Alive and Pound, have been around for a few years. But, the benefits you receive when you take this type of class are so much greater than those of your average aerobics class. For one thing, everyone is smiling and having a ball! It doesn’t surprise me that this trend has come around now and is especially popular with women because drums put us in synch with Mother Earth. In fact, in ancient cultures sacred drumming was performed by women.

Drums have been used in every culture for many purposes from religious rituals and other ceremonies, to sporting events, and as a way to communicate or signal. Shamans used drumming as a means of reaching an altered or trance-like state so that they can connect with the spirit dimension. Drumming has also been used therapeutically since ancient times.

Today, in addition to being a cardio workout, modern research shows that drumming has many positive effects on your health. The “medicine” drum is still used in many Native American ceremonies today for good reason: drumming can promote physical and emotional healing, boost your immune system, produce feelings of well-being, and – all drummer jokes aside – it can even make you smarter!



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Have you ever tried a drumming cardio class or participated in a drum circle? Drumming releases endorphins, enkephalins and Alpha waves in the brain, which are associated with general feelings of well-being and euphoria, which may help people who suffer from mental illness. Go to my latest blog to learn more! [#drumming](#) [#drummersrule](#) [#drummingcircle](#) [#drnorthrup](#)

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Your Brain on Drums

Drumming is a great workout for your brain and actually can make you smarter because when you drum you access your entire brain. Research shows that the physical transmission of rhythmic energy to the brain actually synchronizes the left and right hemispheres. So, when the logical left hemisphere and the intuitive right hemisphere of your brain begin to pulsate together, your inner guidance system – or intuition – becomes stronger.

And listening to drum sounds regularly can have the same effect as drumming itself.

The sound of drumming generates new neuronal connections in all parts of the brain. The more connections that can be made within the brain, the more integrated our experiences become. This leads to a deeper sense of self-awareness.

Drumming also appears to synchronize the lower areas of the brain (non-verbal) with the frontal cortex (language and reasoning). This integration produces feelings of insight and certainty.

For these reasons therapeutic drumming may be a powerful tool in helping retrain the brains of people who have some level of damage or impairment, such as with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), after a stroke (<http://www.drnorthrup.com/heart-disease/>), or where there is neurological disease such as Parkinson's.

Finally, drumming can induce a natural “high” by increasing Alpha brain waves. When the brain changes from Beta waves

(concentration) to Alpha waves, you feel calm and relaxed.

As such, Alpha waves can also produce feelings of well-being and even euphoria, which may help people who suffer from mental illness, such as depression and anxiety (<http://www.drnorthrup.com/unstuck-your-guide-to-seven-stage-journey-out-of-depression/>).

This same Alpha activity is associated with meditation and other integrative modes of consciousness.

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Drumming can have positive effects on your health and may help with many conditions from stress (<http://www.drnorthrup.com/five-natural-stress-busters/>), fatigue, and anxiety (<http://www.drnorthrup.com/unstuck-your-guide-to-seven-stage-journey-out-of-depression/>), to hypertension (<http://www.drnorthrup.com/new-blood-pressure-guidelines-what-do-they-mean/>), asthma, chronic pain (<http://www.drnorthrup.com/pains-deeper-meaning/>), arthritis (<http://www.drnorthrup.com/heal-arthritis-release-fear-anger/>), mental illness, addiction (<http://www.drnorthrup.com/overcome-addiction-substance-abuse/>), and even cancer.

Here's why drumming is good for you:

1. **Makes you happy.** Participate in a drum circle or take a cardio drumming class and you will see how happy it makes you. Drumming releases endorphins, enkephalins and Alpha waves in the brain, which are associated with general feelings of well-being and euphoria.
2. **Induces deep relaxation.** In one study, blood samples from participants who participated in an hour-long drumming session revealed a reversal in stress hormones.
3. **Helps control chronic pain.** Drumming can certainly serve as a distraction from pain. And, it promotes the production of endorphins and endogenous opiates, which

are the body's own morphine-like painkillers.

4. **Boosts your immune system.** Studies show that drumming circles boost the immune system. Barry Bittman, MD, neurologist and President of the Yamaha Music & Wellness Institute (<http://www.yamahainstitute.org/>), has shown that group drumming actually increases natural T-cells, which help the body combat cancer as well as other viruses, including AIDS.
5. **Creates a sense of connectedness.** Drumming circles and group drumming classes provide an opportunity for “synchronicity” in that you connect with your own spirit at a deeper level while also connecting with other like-minded people.
6. **Aligns your body and mind with the natural world.** The Greek origin of the word “rhythm” is “to flow.” Drumming allows you to flow with the rhythms of life by simply feeling the beat.
7. **Provides a way to access a higher power.** Shamans often use drumming as a means to integrate mind, body and spirit. They focus on the whole body and then integrate the healing at both the physical and spiritual level by drumming, which connects spiritual forces.
8. **Releases negative feelings.** The act of drumming can serve as a form of self-expression. You can literally drum out your feelings. When held, negative emotions can form energy blockages. The physical stimulation of hitting the drums can help remove those blockages. Drumming has even been used therapeutically to help addicts deal with their emotions.
9. **Puts you in the present moment.** While drumming you are moving your awareness toward the flow of life. When you are flowing with the rhythm of life you cannot be caught up in your past or worrying about your future.
10. **Allows for personal transformation.** Drumming

stimulates creative expression. When you drum in a group, you not only get to self-express, but you get feedback from the other drummers. It's the equivalent of talk therapy! Drum circles provide a means of exploring your inner self, and expanding your consciousness while being part of a community.

Have you ever tried drumming? Please share your experiences with me in the comments section.

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Christiane Northrup, M.D., is a visionary pioneer and a leading authority in the field of women's health and wellness. Recognizing the unity of body, mind, and spirit, she empowers women to trust their inner wisdom, their connection with Source, and their ability to truly flourish.

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