

Your Brain on Drums

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Cardio drumming has many amazing positive health benefits. For one thing, everyone is smiling and having so much fun! The act of drumming in a judge-free atmosphere can serve as a form of self-expression. Literally you can drum out your feelings, and the physical stimulation of hitting the exercise ball helps remove negative emotions that are held in and can form energy blockages. Cardio drumming integrates physical and emotional healing. It relieves stress, boosts your immune system, and can even make you smarter!

Over 14 years ago (before the Kirksey Community Recreation Center was built), I often attended Dena Raptis's fitness classes. My favorite classes were her cycle, cardio/strength, and kickboxing. Two years ago when I heard she was teaching Drums Alive, I decided to try out this new class. As always, I was inspired by her passion and talent. This time I was inspired in a whole different way. Dena was diagnosed with MS in 1996. Instead of feeling sorry for herself, she became a Master Trainer and Ambassador for Drums Alive. Drums Alive was the first researched-based cardio drumming program that utilizes drumming on stability balls and incorporates aerobic type movement along with it. It is with the use of poly rhythms AND incorporating body movement that really helps to build even stronger brains. Dena also teaches special-needs kids and adults with early-onset dementia, Alzheimer's disease, as well as other neurological and autoimmune diseases. Dena adds, "As soon as I started having issues with teaching the more intense classes, I realized that Drums Alive was something I could do for the rest of my life, and I truly believe that it helps heal me".

When you drum, you can become smarter because drumming accesses your entire brain. The rhythmic energy of the brain actually synchronizes the left and right hemispheres. As a result, when the logical left hemisphere and the intuitive right hemisphere of your brain start to pulsate together, your intuition becomes stronger.

Those who suffer from addiction, mental illness, ADD, strokes, Parkinson's, or some level of brain damage or impairment can use cardio drumming as a powerful therapeutic tool. Drumming can induce a natural "high" by releasing endorphins and increasing Alpha brain waves. Alpha waves are dominant during quietly flowing thoughts, and in aid in overall mental coordination, calmness, alertness, mind/body integration and learning.

Cardio drumming actually increases natural T-cells, which help the body combat cancer as well as other viruses, including AIDS. Ann Webster, PhD, reports how stress takes a toll on the immune system. When you're under stress, blood levels of stress hormones go up and your body is no longer able to make killer cells and the other cells of the immune system in the amounts it normally would, and that can lead to disease progression. Reducing stress is very restorative by getting the system back into balance.

From my 15 years of teaching and studying yoga, I have noticed the calming benefits of being in the present moment. While drumming, you are moving your awareness toward the flow of life and

cannot be caught in the monkey mind of worrying about the future or being caught up in the past. Sound vibrations resonate through every cell in our bodies, which stimulate the release of negative cellular memories. Music Educator Ed Mikenas shares that “Drumming emphasizes self-expression, teaches how to rebuild emotional health, and addresses issues of violence and conflict through expression and integration of emotions.”

I recently started a community-based special event cardio drumming group called “The Livonia Beat” LLC. We are a group of fun-loving people who spread the joy of movement and music. All who currently take my classes (age 16 and up) are welcome. Contact me to have “The Livonia Beat” LLC play for your special event! We provide energy and promote fitness for all ages and abilities by performing at places such as the Senior Center, 5k's, parades, kids' community events, and more.

Have I convinced you to try out cardio drumming? Drumming is for EVERYONE! No requirements for advanced physical abilities or specialized talent. Drumming is a universal language. It transcends race, gender, age, and nationality. In fact, nearly every culture on earth has some form of drumming tradition. See you in class soon!

“Drum Strong” Thursdays and Saturdays at 8:30 am

“Therapeutic Cardio Drumming” monthly with Wendy and Elone on Fridays at 5:00 pm (see fliers at Kirksey Rec).

“Cardio Drumming with Wendy” Wednesday evenings at Dance Innovations (see Wendy for specific dates and times).