

Boquete Health & Hospice



The Rhythms of Life: The Wellness Benefits of Drumming

By Art Blevins

Last month the Magic of Music Team looked at the [health and wellness benefits of dancing](#): moving your body to the music. Drumming is another way to move one's body to the music and to get healthier in the process. As a matter of fact, a recent [Forbes article](#) named drumming and dancing to be the healthiest of the performing arts [1].

As scientific research is validating the health and wellness benefits of drumming, programs are beginning to emerge worldwide that utilize drumming to promote health and well-being. Some of these drumming programs specifically focus on the promotion of [healthy aging](#). [2]

Numerous studies have shown the health and wellness benefits of drumming include the following. [3]

- Promotes brain health and cognitive function
- Relieves depression
- Lowers blood pressure
- Reduces anxiety and stress
- Boosts cardio
- Increases energy
- Improves circulation
- Enhances mental well-being
- Burns calories (Dr. Marcus Smith, from Chichester University, recently concluded that an hour of vigorous drumming could burn between 400 and 600 calories.)

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Physiologically, drumming releases endorphins, enkephalins and alpha waves in the brain, which are associated with general feelings of well-being and euphoria. Drumming can also induce a reversal in stress hormones, can serve as a distraction from pain, and also promotes the production of endogenous opiates, which are the body's own morphine-like painkillers. [3]

Group Drumming

[Studies by the Royal College of Music](#) in London show that group drumming improves social cohesion and social resilience. [4] Group drumming 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. [5]

[Scientific research](#) specifically focusing on group drumming activities has identified the following wellness benefits. [6]

- (1) Hedonia: positive affect and pleasant physical effects of drumming;
- (2) Agency: initiative and sense of control;
- (3) Accomplishment: non-specific and in relation to musical goals;
- (4) Engagement: through focus and flow;
- (5) Redefinition of self: through self-awareness, construction of a positive identity, self-prospection and incorporation of a musical identity;
- (6) Social well-being: through connectedness and positive relationships;

Research studies also show that drumming circles boost the immune system. Barry Bittman, MD, neurologist and President of the Yamaha Music & Wellness Institute, has shown that group drumming actually increases natural T-cells, which help the body combat cancer as well as other viruses, including AIDS. [5]

So Powerful That It's Therapeutic (Literally)

One of the primary reasons drumming is such an effective health and wellness practice is that it keeps one's focus in the present moment. Drumming requires one to *continuously* pay close attention to the present moment. Deeply focusing on the rhythmic patterns controls the thought process and thus helps to reduce mental chatter, induce relaxation, and calm the mind. Even simple drumming practices allow you to free your mind from the “clutter” that trickles down to your overall well-being. [3]

Staying present is not difficult to do, however it does require a *continuous* concentration which is one of its primary benefits. Drumming is a fun way to enjoy the present moment and stay glued there! While drumming, one's awareness is attentive 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. This is one of the reasons why drumming therapy is effective treatment for individuals [recovering from mental health issues](#) [7] as well as individuals [recovering from addiction](#) [8]. I

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have personally been involved in leading therapeutic meditative drumming sessions at [Serenity Vista](#) addiction recovery facility. In this capacity, I have witnessed the health and wellness benefits flourish in many individuals with absolutely no prior musical training. As a matter of fact, in that capacity, I have never seen a single person fail at drumming! The health and wellness benefits of drumming are literally available to everyone.

JUST DO IT!

One needs no prior musical training to jump in and play the drums. You don't need to buy an instrument. Hand clapping, foot-stomping, beating a wooden spoon on a metal pot, and even singing or vocalizations can be used in a drum circle. Some people erroneously believe they have no natural sense of rhythm. However, walking is a naturally rhythmic activity that most of us perform everyday as one foot is placed repetitively over and over again one in front of the other. Without thinking too much about it, this natural rhythm simply happens. It's a natural flow. And drumming can be the same way, especially if we keep it simple and don't think too much about it, much like walking.

Boquete Drummers

Boquete has a wonderful weekly opportunity for you to jump in and participate in the rhythms!

What: Drum Circle hosted by Boquete Drummers and Al Mills (loaner drums are available).

When: 4 pm every Wednesday (rain or shine)

Where: Boquete (Panama) - at Stone Cabins on the Terrazza!

Directions: Park at Casa Vieja Restaurant and walk across the foot bridge.

More Information:

- [Boquete Drummers on Facebook](#)
- [Boquete Drummers on Chiriqui.Life](#)
- [Boquete Drummers on Boquete.Ning](#)
- [Al Mills on YouTube \(videos of Boquete Drummers\)](#)

Drumming at Home

If you do not feel comfortable playing drums in a group, you can still reap many of the health and wellness benefits of drumming in the privacy of your own home. Check out the resources below, grab something nearby to help you find your rhythm, and get pleasantly lost in the groovy rhythms! Here are some playlists for listening and/or drumming along at home.

- [Kodo-Japanese Tambour Drummers](#)
- [2,000 Drummers on the Beach](#)
- [Relaxing Hang Drum](#)
- [Tabla & Hang Drum](#)
- [Tongue Drum](#)

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- [African Conga Drumming](#)
- [Shamanic Drums](#)
- [Art Blakey - Best Jazz Drums](#)
- [Hip Hop Drum Beat](#)
- [GoGo Funk Beat](#)

We Welcome Your Feedback

Do you know of other opportunities in the Boquete area to participate in drumming activities? Let us know! Email us at Music@boquetehospice.org

REFERENCES

- [1] ["Drumming And Dancing Found To Be The Healthiest Of The Performing Arts" - Forbes - Jun 14, 2021](#)
- [2] [Health & Wellness Programmes at Sustaining Rhythms Music Circles](#)
- [3] ["What Can Drumming Do For Your Health?"- Drumeo - Pamela Lynn-Seraphine](#)
- [4] ["RCM Finds Drumming Has Positive Impact on Mental Health" - Royal College of Music - London](#)
- [5] ["10 Health Reasons to Start Drumming" - Christiane Northrup, M.D.](#)
- [6] ["Promoting well-being through group drumming with mental health service users and their carers" – International Journal of Health and Well-Being 2018, VOL. 13](#)
- [7] ["Making music for mental health: how group drumming mediates recovery" - Psychology of Well-Being \(2016\)](#)
- [8] ["Learn How Drum Therapy Helps Relieve Stress and Anxiety in Treatment" - Ashley Recovery Center](#)

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