



IS MUSIC WORTH IT?

# THE BENEFITS OF MUSIC LESSONS

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The positive impact music can  
have on your life is proven

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# LACK OF MUSIC CAN HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT

Scientists worldwide are involved in researching the effect of music on brain function and structure. This research has revealed the *many benefits and value of music tuition.*

## **Developmental benefit**

There is a large body of evidence that supports music education as an important way of developing children's intellectual, social and creative potential. Such children are more likely to develop to their full potential because of the rewarding nature of music participation; children are more likely to devote the time, practice and effort necessary to succeed in their music education and as a result develop strong cognitive and social abilities.



## **Creative benefit**

Music gives children a means to express themselves, to unleash their creativity, and gives children the opportunity to push themselves to the best of their ability. This enables the discovery of hidden or the nurture of budding creativity. A study found a significant difference in communication between the right and left sides of the brain in people with musical training versus those without musical training. Scientists in this area of study believe the greater communication between the brain regions may help develop increased creativity.

## **Brain benefits**

Advances in technology have allowed a greater understanding of what exactly happens inside the brain when it processes music and how this activity contributes to better learning and functioning. Dr Daniel Levitin, neuroscientist, musician and bestselling author of 3 consecutive best-selling books, stated "Musical activity involves nearly every region of the brain that we know about..."

A number of differences in the brains of music students have been recognised. Stronger neural connections (more brain power) and more grey matter (essentially larger brains) have been found, as well as better information processing and higher IQ. Musically trained brains also seem to have better memory and attention and better motor co-ordination. Participating in musical activities stimulates a whole network of brain areas which interact with each other to contribute to enjoyment and understanding of the music. This brain workout leads to improved structure and function through a process called "neuroplasticity" - the brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new connections. The improvements are responsible for many of the benefits of active participation in music.

Musical training therefore impacts processes in the brain that are related to a whole range of other activities. Just like well-exercised muscles protect the bones and joint, music education produces bigger and better functioning brains - a great benefit to people of any age!

## Intellectual/Academic benefit

Strong correlations have been found between learning to play an instrument and academic success. One research study found that music students were 4 times more likely to be recognised for academic performance compared to non-musical peers and three times more likely to have won an award for school attendance.

Another study found that ***student intelligence actually increased by 90% after only 20 days of musical training!***

Although music education by itself may not be responsible for all the improvements and benefits seen in research, scientists believe that the changes in the brain caused by music training can lead to improvements in general cognitive skills like memory, attention, and reading ability, all of which have direct influence on intellect and educational outcomes.

## Social benefits

Recent studies have shown that group music making can increase empathy in toddlers. This connection between music and empathy may be due to improved verbal intelligence.

Playing music improves a child's ability to recognise subtle changes of speech – the way something is said and the emotions underneath the words, not just the words themselves. This in turn is a key element of empathy and emotional intelligence. Children need to develop empathy if they are to thrive in family life, at school, and later, at work.



Furthermore, music is emotional, and musical memories are among the most real and vivid. Musicians must therefore learn how to connect with people on an emotional level. Music students of any age, even the very young, learn how to share attention, cooperate and collaborate. These are extremely valuable skills in both personal relationships and in the workplace.

### **Health benefits**

Studying music also brings life-long health benefits. Emerging evidence shows that life-long music training can offer improved cognitive function as we age. We already know that music therapy has helped people recover from strokes and can be useful in treating a variety of neurological disorders, such as stuttering, autism and Parkinson's disease.



Music training has even been shown to delay the onset of dementia! The strong association between music and speech, as well as the enjoyment of music, make it a useful and flexible rehabilitative technique at many ages. Current research gives compelling insight into the powerful, long-term value gained through music study, from academic and intellectual advantage to health and social benefits. Music study leads to lasting changes in children's brains and parents can be more confident than ever that an investment in music lessons will deliver lifelong benefits for their child.

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