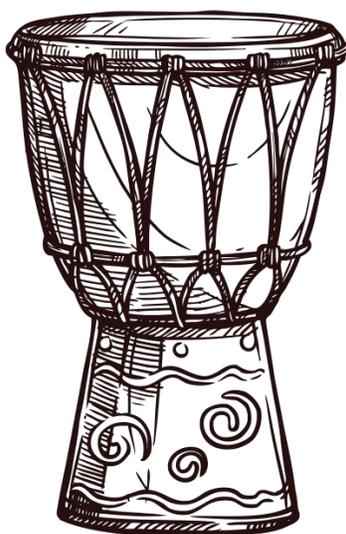


Respectful Beats™

Simple Drumming for Seniors



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The Purpose of Drumming



From the earliest times, drums have been at the center of social and cultural activities all over the world. In fact, it is said to be one of the oldest musical instruments known to mankind. However, drums have not always been used for creating music or even for entertainment. In certain tribal cultures, drums had an important role in the use of rituals and religious ceremonies, for expression and for communication purposes. Across history, they have been used in warfare, as a means of giving signals to the soldiers or to create a noise which drove fear into the enemy. The drum is a sacred element of Native American culture, many of whom believe the beat of the drum to be in sync with the heartbeat of mother earth.

Nowadays, the once primitive drumming circle is emerging as a significant therapeutic tool. Drumming is increasingly being used as a means of improving health and well-being and is a regular activity in youth groups, schools and retirement communities.

Music therapy programs are also increasingly using drums and rhythm to promote healing and self-expression. Drumming helps us get in touch with our inner selves, as well as a fun way to relax and rejuvenate the mind, body and spirit. Drumming

is said to be a valuable treatment for stress, fatigue, anxiety, hypertension, asthma, chronic pain, arthritis, dementia, migraines, cancer, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, stroke, paralysis, emotional disorders, ADHD sufferer's, people with learning difficulties and a wide range of other physical disabilities. It has also been helpful for recovering addicts, troubled adolescents and prisoners.

Drumming creates relaxation which lowers blood pressure. Moreover, it promotes the production of endorphins, the bodies own morphine-like pain killers, and can help in managing pain. Rhythm is such a powerful tool because it permeates the entire brain. It engages both the linear, rational left side of the brain (in the analysis of how rhythms fit together) and the creative, right side of the brain (actual entrainment of rhythm in the body or the appreciation of the music). The two brain hemispheres often emanate different wave frequencies and drumming, like meditation, brings them into alignment.

Group drumming can compliment traditional talk therapy methods. Players can release their feelings with a percussion instrument like a drum. Creating music together in a group can be a unifying experience, encouraging self-expression and camaraderie and also be a lot of fun!

Many corporations organize drumming workshops as team building programs. The workshops aim to encourage employees to work together effectively – playing music then becomes the metaphor for how people work together as a team. These type of workshops can improve communication, break down barriers, boost morale, motivate, re-energize staff, cut stress and increase productivity.

Rhythm provides a creative outlet for even the most hardened individual. Workshops have been used in prisons and with young offenders - providing creative ways to re-channel negative energy, diffuse anger and build team spirit through the power of therapeutic beats.

Many community groups introduced informal drumming to bring children and adults together in a fun-filled environment. The participants can create music and learn a new skill. Most of the times with these communities, folks don't have to worry about playing a certain way nor do they require past drumming experience.

We know the drum continues to play a central role in our society and there are many drumming communities across the country. Check online by searching "local drum circles" to get involved locally. Here are some additional reasons to play drums:

A Drum Is Easy to Play

[Frame drums](#), [paddle drums](#), and [shape drums](#) are easy to hold with two hands in the lap. There are plenty of adaptive instruments to compensate for arthritis and other physical ailments. Mallet cuffs allow drum playing when grasp is weak. Also, certain djembe drums use a drum stand for individuals who are wheelchair-bound.

The Drum Is Peaceful

The drum can simulate a soft, relaxing, predictable, familiar heart beat and serve as gentle vibrational stimulation. Try striking a drum and notice the vibrational sensations that occur. With the right drum, timbre and frequencies, it can indeed be very relaxing.

The Drum Is Versatile

Drums can be used in rehabilitation with several NMT (neurologic music therapy) techniques and/or regular exercise. You can even surround an individual with hand drums to simulate a drum set.

The Drum Is Expressive

You can use drums in place of conversations. The drum can act as an emotional anchor without speaking.

The Drum Speaks Loudly

When you hit a drum lightly, the drum generally responds with resonance and volume. Older adults who may be hard-of-hearing might not be able to hear hand shakers, however most drums are audible and felt.

Simple Concentration Exercises



While many health experts agree that exercise is still the best tool in preventing certain types of disease, there are researchers around the world who have studied the health benefits of playing drums. What does drumming do for your health? Let's find out.

A session of intense drumming keeps your heart rate up – a field day for your immune system. Blood flows to your muscles, taking with it the nutrient-rich oxygen. Your joints and muscles are being used and become more flexible, while your back also gets a great workout. This constant movement floods your body with new white blood cells; keeping you safe from several forms of viruses and diseases. Drumming, particularly on a full set, requires an effort from your biggest muscle groups: abdominal, legs and back. Even a practice pad on the couch involves a small part of your arms and shoulders; it's a great routine to add while sitting in front of the TV.

Playing drums alleviates stress, anger and depression. Stress-fighting estrogen circulates your system while playing drums. It also helps you in re-routing your

anger and frustration in a very positive way. The body has a natural sense of rhythm which is released through different activities. Drums and other percussion instruments help us to get in-tune with our natural self by tapping our *inner* sense of rhythm, making us more focused, coordinated and creative.

All of these benefits lead you to a more positive outlook of life. In effect, you can become productive, sociable and open-minded. It's also important to note that playing drums attracts other musicians to play music with. What if inside you, a potential drummer is developing? Can you think of all the opportunities that await you? :)

Concentration

The secret to building concentration is to actually practice it. Like memorizing, mental focus takes repetitive practice. It doesn't have to be boring though, you can make it a musical experience. For example, pick a simple rhythm to work on like the one below or any other single point of focus. Each time you play this rhythm, work on playing it for longer periods of time without thinking of something else.

You will have to actively move your focus back at first. If you find yourself starting to wander, stop yourself and simply return to the rhythm. Keep increasing this time to increase your concentration muscle. Some people find that it helps to have pen and paper nearby to jot down any distracting thoughts so you come back to them later.

If your loss of focus is more severe, we recommend a visit to your doctor to see what options are available – and there are many.

Improving your concentration isn't impossible or mysterious, it just takes effort and persistence. A few minutes each day actively working on it will yield noticeable results. Let's try a rhythm exercise.

Rhythm Exercise #1

1. Sit in a comfortable position on a chair with your feet squarely on the floor and spine straight.
2. Take 3 slow deeps breaths.
3. You can play this exercise with your hands on your legs or on a drum.
4. **R** = Right Hand **L** = Left Hand
5. Pick a slow, steady tempo to start and see if you can play all the way through the exercise without losing your place.

- (1) R L
- (2) RR LL
- (3) RRR LLL
- (4) RRRR LLLL
- (5) RRRRR LLLLL
- (6) RRRRRR LLLLLL
- (7) RRRRRRR LLLLLLL
- (8) RRRRRRRR LLLLLLLL

How did that go?

Did you find you could play all the way to 8 without losing your place? The key is: once you begin, maintain a steady tempo until completed.

Now let's work backwards from 8-1

Rhythm Exercise #2

(8) R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L

(7) R R R R R R R L L L L L L L

(6) R R R R R L L L L L

(5) R R R R L L L L

(4) R R R L L L

(3) R R L L

(2) R L L

(1) R L

Great job!

Now, let's combine them: 1-8, 8-1 (without stopping)

Rhythm Exercise #3

- (1) R L
- (2) RR LL
- (3) RRR LLL
- (4) RRRR LLLL
- (5) RRRRR LLLLL
- (6) RRRRRR LLLLLL
- (7) RRRRRRR LLLLLLL
- (8) RRRRRRRR LLLLLLLL
- (7) RRRRRRRR LLLLLLL
- (6) RRRRRR LLLLLL
- (5) RRRRR LLLLL
- (4) RRRR LLLL
- (3) RRR LLL
- (2) RR LL
- (1) R L

Circulation

Here is an exercise you can do which, in addition to helping with concentration, will improve your overall blood flow and circulation.

Rhythm Exercise #4

1. Sit in a comfortable position on a chair with your feet squarely on the floor and spine straight.
2. Take 3 slow deeps breaths.
3. You can play this exercise with your hands on your legs or on a drum.

RH = Right Hand

RF = Right Foot

LH = Left Hand

LF = Left Foot

RH RF LH LF

RH LH RF LF

RH LF LH RF

LH RH RF LF

Rhythm Exercise #5

1. Sit in a comfortable position on a chair with your feet squarely on the floor and spine straight.
2. Take 3 slow deeps breaths.
3. You can play this exercise with your hands on your legs or on a drum.
4. Play the bold note (accented note) as loud as you can on the drum or on your leg, and the other notes as soft as you can play them. Use your hands only for this exercise.
5. Pick a slow, steady tempo and repeat the exercise without stopping for a few minutes.

R L R L

R **L** R L

R L **R** L

R L R **L**

Exercise #6 – Sitting Still

Sit in a comfortable chair and see how still you can be. This is not as easy as it seems. You will have to center your attention on sitting still. At first, I advise sitting in a relaxed position for five minutes. After you are able to keep perfectly still, increase the time to ten minutes and then to fifteen. Never strain yourself to keep still. You must be relaxed completely.

Exercise #7 - Concentrating on your heartbeat

Lie down and thoroughly relax your muscles. Concentrate on the beating of your heart. Do not pay any attention to anything else. Think how this great organ is pumping the blood to every part of the body; try to actually feel your heart. Appreciate all the work it has to do during the day without your involvement.

Coordination

The elderly population can have an array of health challenges, which may have an effect on their capacity to remain steady. Medical conditions such as arthritis, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, Multiple Sclerosis, and heart disease can reduce their ability to stay balanced and move freely. It is this unsteadiness that eventually leads to falls and, subsequently, injuries.

Understandably, individuals become less active as they become older because their bodies take longer periods to repair. Nonetheless, engaging in a form of moderate exercise is necessary to improve your balance and coordination.

The problem is that people are often unaware that their coordination is slipping. While there are hallmarks of clumsiness—such as poor handwriting and constantly banged-up shins and knees—even naturally agile people need to work to boost balance with age. "Balance is a separate system, just like strength or flexibility.

You can improve it if you continue to challenge it," says Edward Laskowski, MD, codirector of the Mayo Clinic Sports Medicine Center in Rochester, MN.

In my work with seniors, I've found that a simple drumming exercise works well in hand coordination. (The same exercise can be performed with both feet as well) When you have good coordination, your chances of getting hurt or injured decrease. Results I've found to be true in my interactive workshops. Coordination is a skill that also requires certain levels of strength, agility and balance – all working together to increase success at physical activities.

The simplest explanation of coordination would be rubbing your stomach and patting your head at the same time.

Although age takes a toll on the joints and muscles, the principles of improving the body's strength, flexibility and balance still hold true for seniors just as much as the youth. Intense wind sprints and hundreds of push ups may not be the best route to senior fitness, but there are still plenty of types of exercises for the elderly to help with coordination.

Stand On One Leg

“Try to do this while you are washing the dishes”, suggests Laskowski. “When you can, hold the pose for 30 seconds on each side and stand on a less stable surface such as a couch cushion. To increase the challenge even more, do it with your eyes closed.

Tai Chi and Yoga

A recent study of tai chi practitioners in their mid-60s found that on measures of stability, most scored around the 90th percentile of the American Fitness Standards. Yoga works, too: According to Temple University research, women 65 and older who took twice-weekly yoga classes for 9 weeks increased ankle

flexibility and showed more confidence in walking. That last part is important, says lead researcher Jinsup Song, PhD, "because when people are fearful of losing balance, they tend to do less to challenge themselves." That fear doesn't plague only the elderly: A Howard University study found that among those 65 and older, 22% had already become fearful of falling.

Squats

In addition to ideas above, try squats. Start with a simple squat: With feet hip-width apart, bend knees and hips and slowly lower yourself as if sitting in a chair. Keep your arms straight out, abs tight, back straight, and knees above shoelaces. Stop when thighs are parallel to the floor (or as close as you can get), then contract your glutes as you stand back up. Aim for up to 3 sets of 10, with a 1-minute break after each set. Since the drums require more coordination than any other instrument, seniors who partake in drumming classes can increase their coordination skills which ultimately will lead to a life of more energy and confidence.

Simple Hand Drum Techniques



When you understand the technique necessary to make a quality sound, it will bring you closer to the instrument. The best drum for simple hand drumming exercises and all around playing is the djembe.

Growing in popularity, this African ‘all purpose’ drum will add depth and tone to your rhythms. Played with the hands, almost anyone can pick up a djembe and have a go. Learning the top 3 djembe drumming techniques is a little harder. Here, we’re going to teach you the three main techniques you will need to master basic djembe.

The Basics

Starting in a seated position, rest the djembe between your knees. Angle the head of the drum away from your body or if using a bigger djembe, tilt the drum off the floor . This will allow the sound to escape so you can position your hands correctly.

Holding the drum at this angle also ensures that the djembe is positioned with the natural orientation of your arm so you can play with ease.

To get the correct hand position, form a triangle with your hands and place it on the center of drum head. Make sure your thumbs rest on the rim of the drum. The key here is to maintain this triangular shape while you play.

Bass

The first drumming sound you need to learn is the bass. It might be the easiest to play, but it is fundamental to djembe playing; it is the most commonly used note, and forms the foundation of any song or performance.

Holding your hand flat, with your fingers together; strike the center of the drum with the palm of your hand. As soon as your hand hits the drum head, pull it away immediately. This allows the sound to project.

Tone

Played with the fingers and not your palm, the tone produces a higher pitched note than the bass. To master this technique, strike the rim of the drum with slightly cupped fingers – remember to keep them firmly together.

Each finger should hit the drum at the same tone, with the centre joint of your fingers meeting the edge of the drum. Like the bass, you need to pull your hand away immediately after impact to emphasise the crisp sound of the note.

Slap

The slap is the final ‘beginner’ djembe drumming technique, but it is considered to be the most difficult to play. As you would expect, the slap is played by using a ‘slapping’ motion. You should be careful not to use too much force though.

Cup your hand – like you’re trying to catch a fly on the djembe head – and bring your hand down onto the drum sideways. Keep all your fingers together and play the slap somewhere in between the center and rim of the drum.

This should be a single, swift movement but one that will take a little practice to get completely right.

The Beat of the Drum – A Poem

“THE BEAT OF THE DRUM CREATES A THRUM IN THE SOUL.

RHYTHMS PLAYING OUT IN THEIR OWN UNIQUE ROLE.

CRESCENDOS CRASHING BEAUTIFULLY WITH CREATIVITY SO FINE.

WHETHER ONE DRUM SOUNDS OUT LOUD OR NINETY-NINE COMBINE.



MUSIC IS A THERAPY THAT SEEKS TO COMFORT LONELY HEARTS.

IT ENCOURAGES PARTICIPATION WITH ITS INTRICATE PARTS.

NOT ASKING FOR EXPERTISE, JUST A WILLINGNESS TO TRY.

GRAB YOUR STICKS AND SWIZZLES TO LET THE RHYTHMS FLY!



THE POWER OF DRUMMING INSPIRES US ALL TO BE MORE.

IT ENCOURAGES ONE AND ALL TO LET CREATIVITY POUR.

*FOR SOME, THE DRUM MAY BE A DIFFERENT WAY TO EXERCISE.
AND FOR ALL, THE BEATS BECOME SUCH A WONDERFUL SURPRISE.*



*DRUMMING ALSO HELPS A TEAM BECOME MORE UNIFIED.
IT CREATES BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP AND HIGH LEVELS OF SELF-PRIDE.
CREATE NEW ENERGIES FROM THE POWER OF AN OFFERED BEAT,
AND YOU MAY FIND THAT THE RESULTS ARE SO VERY SWEET!*



*BECAUSE EACH PERSON HAS A RHYTHM THAT IS RESIDING DEEP
INSIDE.
LONGING TO SPRING FORTH WITH THE DRUM SERVING AT ITS GUIDE.
EVEN A PAIR OF HANDS CAN FIND THIS BEAT AND ITS DESIRE.
COME EMBRACE YOUR RHYTHMS NOW AND FIND YOUR SOULFUL FIRE.*



*DIFFERENT DRUMS CREATE DIFFERENT SOUNDS, ENJOYED ALL
AROUND.*

WATCH AS FEET START TAPPING HERE AND THERE, ON THE GROUND.

WHEN YOU START SOME DRUMMING, YOUR SPIRIT RECEIVES A BOOST.

*WITH THE LOVE WHICH COMES FROM EVERY BEAT YOUR HANDS HAVE
PRODUCED.*



SOME FIND A RHYTHM THAT SOUNDS OUT BRIGHT AND FAST.

OR MAYBE A SLOWER TEMPO WITH ECHOES FROM THE PAST.

*BRING SOME SYNCOPATION, OR LET YOUR ARMS JUST START TO
SWING.*

YOU WILL FIND THE DRUMS ARE WAITING THERE TO SING.



THE POWER OF A RHYTHM IS WITNESSED TIME AND TIME AGAIN.

*MESSAGES OF HOPE WHICH OFFERS EMPOWERING MOMENTS TO
BEGIN.*

ALLOW THE INSPIRATION OF THE INNER BEAT TO RUN,

AND YOU WILL FIND THAT DRUMMING CAN BE A LOT OF FUN!



*ANYONE AT ANY AGE CAN TURN A PAGE TO FIND THE POWER.
WHETHER YOUR BEATS LINGER FOR A MINUTE OR THEY LAST FOR AN
HOUR.*

*UNITING ONE AND ALL IN VARIOUS RHYTHMIC HARMONIES.
EVEN IF ALL YOU DO IS TAP OUT A QUICK BEAT ON YOUR KNEES.*



*COME JOIN US FOR A WORKSHOP AND MAKE A BEAT WITH YOUR HAND
BRING A DRUM, OR BRING YOURSELF, FOR THIS VENTURE IS GRAND.
LISTEN CLOSELY TO THE INTERNAL RHYTHMS BEFORE THEY CHOOSE
TO FADE.*

***BECAUSE THAT IS THE MUSIC OF YOUR SOUL WANTING TO BE
PLAYED.”***



About Respectful Beats™



In 2015, author Steve Benedetto was working as a server in the dining section of a nearby retirement home outside of Boston. After waiting tables for several months, his supervisor (who knew he was a drummer) asked him if he would be willing to perform for the residents. He assumed the residents would have no interest at all in seeing him perform, but he agreed nonetheless. He was shocked to see an enthusiastic crowd of more than 50 seniors showing up to see him perform on the drums. His performance turned out to be such a positive experience for all that Steve was asked if he would create a workshop for the residents. He followed through with great success and was soon holding workshops on a regular basis. After expanding the content he started offering his workshops to other retirement communities. Steve then formed Respectful Beats™ to combine his love of performing drums with teaching all demographics.



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