

10 Advantages of Drum Lessons

By Michael Burris

1. **Hundreds of studies** have shown the mental, physical, social, and educational benefits of music lessons (Google “Benefits of Music Education”), proving “it is only through the active generation and manipulation of sound that music can rewire the brain. We don’t see these kinds of biological changes in people who are just listening to music, who are not playing an instrument” (Nina Kraus, Auditory Neuroscience Lab). Here is a summary showing music lessons help you to:
 - **Enjoy life so much more** by giving you something to really look forward to, breaking up the monotony of the weekly routine. Variety is indeed the spice of life! Rarely is there a dull moment when there’s so much music to learn! Playing music has also proven to reduce chronic stress. I’ve seen so many tired, stressed-out people with headaches after 15 minutes of playing music have no symptoms at all – like a miracle!
 - **Music lessons teaches you how to succeed in many other areas of life** because it helps you set goals, develops a map or plan to get there, builds self-respect by keeping appointments with yourself, fosters accountability to others by being responsible for lesson practice, expands the ability to critically listen, improves focus and concentration, grows self-control of mind over matter by teaching your body to obey your will, and teaches persevere until you get the job done – as they say in the performing arts: “The show must go on!”
 - **Develop a larger portion of the brain and nervous system**, auditory tone-rhythm distinction, attentive listening, IQ, spatial-temporal ability, pattern recognition, reasoning and problem solving, and memory retention, thus improving academic skills and higher test scores in: Left-brain’s math (like fractions), architecture, engineering, computers, sciences, reading comprehension, learning languages, and Right-brain’s creativity, imagination, intuition, and art.
 - **Improve large & small-muscle motor skills** for improved strength, eye-to-body coordination, and dexterity. Dr. Andrew Weil uses music in Integrative Medicine as physical therapy and to speed up healing. I’ve used it for years in occupational therapy for mentally and physically handicapped students.
 - **Cultivate social and behavioral skills** through attentive, discerning listening and the development of cooperation and teamwork when playing music with others, working together toward a common goal. It has shown to curb depression and loneliness in older people. Many my lifelong friends are those I’ve played music with!
 - **Develop discipline, self-control, patience, and perseverance**, teaching that delayed gratification is the key to success in most endeavors, and that significant rewards come to those who through patient practice work through the learning curve and over the obstacles.
 - **Boost confidence and self-esteem** by learning: to take the instructors’ constructive criticism and turn it into positive growth, that everybody has room for improvement, to feel more comfortable doing something (even speaking) in front of others, and to build a skill that can bring you and others great pleasure throughout your life, not to mention be a source of handy income – even paying your way through college! We are all creatures of habit, so you might as well cultivate habits that can really pay off in your future instead of the dead ends that countless hours of TV, videos games, and partying lead to.
 - **Learn more about history and diverse cultures** through the wide array of music genres, styles, and their development. Playing music with so many different kinds of people helps reduce bias, prejudice, and stereotypes.
2. **An instructor will help you keep your goals and the steps to achieving them ever before you**, and help you become more accountable to them until they are accomplished. In this busy, distracting world, it’s so easy to get caught up in the “tyranny of the urgent” or “the mood of the moment” and get sidetracked from what’s most important to you. Life abhors a vacuum! If you don’t intentionally fill it yourself, by default it will be filled for you by someone else, and often with many trivial matters. Without a burning “YES” within you, it’s almost impossible to say “NO” to the barrage of insignificant diversions around us that would steal our dreams from us. Without “WHY” we have no power! Whatever we focus on expands, so an instructor helps you stay focused in keeping your Main Things the Main Things!
3. **An instructor will give you detailed lesson plan** for your week! Most people don’t plan to fail – they just fail to plan. When you take action on your intention, you move abstract, formless energy into concrete, physical reality! If you don’t take definitive steps to move toward your dreams, by the physic’s Law of Entropy, the chances of your dreams

materializing only decreases over time. Consequently, every day you put off taking the necessary steps, makes your dreams even less likely from manifesting. Unless you move, you will rust as frozen as the Tin Man in the Wizard of Oz! And without a target, you'll just be shooting arrows aimlessly into the air! An instructor will help you keep moving toward your dreams, helping you create a clear target with a bulls-eye, improve your aim, and hit it more often!

4. **An instructor will get you fired up!** A powerful rocket will sit on the launch pad forever unless you light a fire under it! Also, it's a law of nature that you absolutely can't reap a harvest without first sowing a lot of seed! That's what taking a music lesson every week does – it sows the seeds of your dream, giving you hope that you will see the harvest of one day making beautiful music!
5. **Weekly music lessons get you to the starting line and an instructor will help you finish the race!** Statistically, 50% of all people fail because they simply don't make it to the starting line – they don't show up, and 45% more fail because they stop before the finish line. Weekly music lessons solve both of these problems by inspiring, motivating, training, and strengthening you to not quit until you succeed! Even a roaring fire will die out if you don't regularly put wood on it, and even the most beautiful plants will die if you don't regularly water them. Each music lesson “puts more wood on the fire” and “pours more water on” to grow your dreams!
6. **Weekly music lessons protect your investments in your dreams!** One of the most tragic things I've witnessed over the years is students who say they can “go it alone” or “just want to take a break for a month.” But the Law of Inertia takes over – a body at rest tends to stay at rest! In fact, 95% of the time 1 month turns into 3 months and within 6 months all their equipment is being sold for a fraction of the cost, and all the time, energy, and money that went into lessons went out the window or down the drain. Oftentimes years later, I get calls from these students, who for the life of them can't remember what was so darn important at the time that they quit, who now have the black cloud of regret following them, and who are desperate to somehow make up for lost time. Don't become a statistic! Don't end up saying “Should a, would a, could a!” Let the Law of Momentum work for you – a body in motion tends to remain in motion!
7. **Weekly music lessons keep your playing fresh, exciting, and meaningful!** By yourself, it's easy for your practice to fall into a rut or for you to hit a plateau, often playing the same things you already know. This gets boring really quick and you get nowhere fast! You might even be practicing things that are relatively inconsequential in the big picture, so you end up “majoring in the minors.” You know that without car mirrors, even the best intentioned driver will be unaware of the cars in their blind spots and end up wrecking their car! What you need is an instructor to be on the lookout for you, musically steering you in the right direction to avoid the many pitfalls and barriers that retard or even injure players, and keep you motivated to learn new skills every week – the skills that matter most! Without the ability to understand the map, you are sure to take the long, meandering road to your musical destination – and maybe even get lost! An instructor will show you the shortest distance between two points, which is a straight line.
8. **Don't stress out about not having the time or being motivated to get enough practice time in.** Don't let this keep you from taking advantage of what weekly music lessons can do for you in reaching your dreams! In this insanely busy world, few students have the discipline to etch out even 20-30 min. of practice a day, so don't beat yourself up or use this as an excuse for not gradually moving towards your goals. Even with my students and performances to keep me on my toes, I find it a challenge to get my daily practice in! However, I have learned that being accountable to other people (like coaches and teachers) is a surefire way to improving the chances you'll play your instrument more often. And not taking weekly music lessons is a surefire way to decrease your chances, and see your dreams evaporate or go up in smoke!
9. **An instructor can feed the flames of your passion** with the best music, videos, magazines, and other learning materials to keep you inspired, motivated, and learning from the best in the business. Don't waste time trying to reinvent the wheel – save enormous time by simply copying or modeling excellence!
10. **Be more than an arm-chair spectator of music, stuck in the audience and wondering what it's really like.** Be a maker of it and be the one on stage! There is a 100 times more excitement performing on stage than being even in the front row of the audience – and people pay hundreds of dollars to get those front row seats! Weekly music lessons are a “fast pass” to playing music with others and even in a band – and the sooner you do the better! As soon as you start jamming with others your motivation levels skyrocket because you immediately see the purpose of what you are being taught in your music lessons. And your practicing will become so much more fun! Taking lessons from instructors who have played for many years in dozens of bands will help you get you on stage so much faster!