

## 5 Benefits of learning to play a musical instrument

The Chinese philosopher Confucius said long ago that:

"Music produces a kind of pleasure which Human Nature cannot do without."

Learning to play music is said to have a range of positive benefits for children and adults of all ages. This article sets out to highlight a few of the most interesting that have been discovered.

### 1. Increase the capacity of a person's memory.

Richard Alleyne, the science correspondent for the Telegraph wrote an article that suggested that regular playing of an instrument change the shape and power of the brain which improves our motor skills. These parts of the brain that control motor skills, hearing, storing audio information and memory become larger and more active when a person learns how to play an instrument and can apparently improve day to day actions such as being alert, planning and emotional perception. They found that for children especially, that learning to play the piano for instance teaches them to be more self-disciplined, more attentive and better at planning.

### 2. Boosting Team Skills.

Team skills are a very important aspect of being successful in life. Playing an instrument requires you to work with others to make music. In band and orchestra settings you must learn how to cooperate with the people around you. Also, in order for a group to make beautiful music, each player and section must learn how to listen to each other and play together.

### 3. Enhances Coordination

The art of playing an instrument requires a lot of hand-eye coordination. A person that is learning to play needs to read the music, convert that into a played melody which uses a lot of brain power and motor skills. To complicate things further, they also need to pay close attention to note length, rhythm, patterns, tempo and much more.

#### 4. Better your mathematical ability

Reading music requires counting notes and rhythms and can help your math skills. Also, learning music theory includes many mathematical aspects. This was highlighted back in 1959 through a study by Friedman that students who play instruments or study the arts are often better in math and achieve higher grades in school than students who don't. (Friedman, B 1959)

#### 5. Promotes your social skills

Playing an instrument can be a great way to enhance your social skills. Some of the best people join bands and orchestras, and many times the friends you make here become like family. It's very common for people to gain lifelong friendships through musical activities like these. The Hampshire Music Service have a wide range of ensembles and orchestras for children, there are a number of orchestras locally for adults to join.

Playing a musical instrument has many benefits and hopefully that will motivate you to keep on practicing and always hold music in high esteem. Part of our ethos at 1st4reeds is to encourage our pupils of any age to play in small groups, ensembles and orchestra.

Author:

Ivan Clarke – 1st4reeds, Clarinet and Saxophone Teacher - Hampshire.