

Documented Medical Benefits of **Drumming**

Stress

Blood samples from participants of an hour-long drumming session revealed a reversal of the hormonal stress response and an increase in natural killer cell activity (Bittman, Berk, Felten, Westengard, Simonton, Pappas, Ninehouser, 2001, *Alternative Therapies*, vol. 7, no. 1).

Depression

Stanford University School of Medicine conducted a study with 30 depressed people over 80 years of age and found that participants in a weekly music therapy group were less anxious, less distressed and had higher self-esteem (Friedman, *Healing Power of the Drum*, 1994).

Cancer

Subjects who participated in a clinical trial using the HealthRhythms protocol showed an increase in natural killer cell activity and an enhanced immune system. While this does not indicate a cure for cancer, such results may be of benefit for those facing this disease. (Bittman, Berk, Felten, Westengard, Simonton, Pappas, Ninehouser, 2001, *Alternative Therapies*, vol. 7, no. 1).

Alzheimer's Disease

According to Clair, Bernstein and Johnson (1995), Alzheimer's patients who drum can connect better with loved ones. The predictability of rhythm may provide the framework for repetitive responses that make few cognitive demands on people with dementia.

Parkinson's Diseases and Stroke

Rhythmic cues can help retrain the brain after a stroke or other neurological impairment, according to Michael Thaurt, director of Colorado State University's Center of Biomedical Research in Music. Researchers have also discovered that hearing slow, steady rhythms, such as drumbeats, helps Parkinson patients move more steadily (Friedman, *Healing Power of the Drum*, 1994).

Chronic Pain

Chronic pain has a devastating propensity for progressively draining quality of life. Technology and pharmacology are falling short of the mark needed to improve quality of life and reduce pain, according to Dr. Barry Bittman in the *Pain Practitioner*. (Lingerman, H. 1995, *Music and You*. In the *Healing Energies of Music*. Wheaton, Ill.: Theosophical Publishing House).

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