

Music makes you smarter

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Regularly playing a musical instrument changes the anatomy and function of the brain and may be used in therapy to improve cognitive skills.

There is growing evidence that musicians have structurally and functionally different brains compared with non-musicians. In particular, the areas of the [brain](#) used to process music are larger or more active in musicians. Even just starting to learn a [musical instrument](#) can change the [neurophysiology](#) of the brain.

Lutz Jäncke, a member of Faculty of 1000 Medicine, proposes using music in neuropsychological therapy, for example to improve language skills, memory, or mood. In a review for Faculty of 1000 Biology Reports, an online publication in which leading researchers highlight advances in their field, Jäncke summarizes recent studies of professional musicians.

The brain regions involved in music processing are also required for other tasks, such as memory or language skills. "If [music](#) has such a strong influence on brain plasticity," writes Jäncke, "this raises the question of whether this effect can be used to enhance cognitive performance."

Several studies indeed show that musical practice increases memory and language skills, and Jäncke suggests expanding this field: "Hopefully, the current trend in the use of musicians as a model for brain plasticity will continue ... and extend to the field of neuropsychological rehabilitation."

More information: f1000biology.com/reports/10.3410/B1-78/

Source: Faculty of 1000: Biology and Medicine

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