

What are the benefits of adults learning keyboard?

As people live longer and enjoy a better quality of life, there is growing interest in all forms of adult education including music courses. Figures in the U.S show that in 1991, about 13% of adults were involved in some form of training and in 1998 this figure increased to 40% (US census bureau, 1999).

The goal of lifelong learning earns new impetus with the knowledge that humans have the capacity to grow new neural connections throughout their lives. But this won't happen automatically, and certainly not by sitting in a rocking chair watching television. We need to undertake new and meaningful learnings –and what better activity than music. Playing music maintains sharpness of the mind and awakens us to our fully-human selves. But the converse is also true: neural systems that are seldom used shrink, disappear or are taken over for other purposes. Doing nothing is dangerous. Use it or lose it.

Older people *do* have a capacity for learning musical skills. Age does not hinder this and growing evidence suggests that musical instruction retards loss of brain function in the elderly. In fact much recent evidence supports the value of music-making for health reasons.

One such study showed that the levels of human growth hormone significantly increased in a test group having music lessons in comparison with those participants who did not receive lessons. In another, it was revealed that playing the piano/keyboard reduced stress more significantly than either resting or watching television.

It is common for anxiety, depression and loneliness to increase with the aging process, but again, research studies find this much less common for those who play music.

There's also a feel good factor. Many adults report personal growth benefits such as an increase in self-esteem and confidence through their musical encounters. They get immense satisfaction by achieving the accomplishment of making their own music.

My keyboard course is uniquely structured to maximise learning through state of the art pedagogical design. It offers personal growth through individual and collaborative learning styles and is best encountered with a mix of instruction and personal discovery learning.

You will learn new skills, improve your technique, and deepen your understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of music. Your learning will involve working with others in a friendly, non-competitive and enjoyable manner. You will be able to work at your own pace with no pressure from the instructor or anyone else.

Most people find group learning to be more fun than individual lessons because it's a more stimulating learning environment. So get some friends together with a copy of this course each and start! A group of four will do. Get yourself a keyboard, headphones and a copy each of my book. What could be better than a weekly dinner party followed by an hour of keyboard with friends in a fun, friendly environment? Alternatively, make it a family project. There is plenty of support at my website (address below) if you get stuck, including YouTube videos on every lesson (coming soon).

If you haven't seen one for a while, you will be amazed at the quality and versatility of the modern keyboard. These are easy to use and full of valuable functions. I read in December 2007 that in the state of Queensland Australia, the humble keyboard was the number one selling Christmas item. No wonder. Participate in music. We all respond to it, we can all make it; we are all of us human and therefore musical.

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