How Music Affects Us and Promotes Health

1 Music is one of the few activities that involve using the whole brain. It can have surprising benefits not only for learning a language, improving memory and focusing attention, but also for physical coordination and development. Of course, music can be distracting if it's too loud, or if it takes our attention away from what we are trying to do, but for the most part, exposure to many kinds of music has beneficial effects.

2 Music is good for your heart. Research shows that it is the musical tempo, rather than style, that has good effects on the heart. A number of young men and women, half of whom were trained musicians, engaged in one study which was carried out by Italian and British researchers. The participants listened to six styles of music, including rap and classical pieces, with random two-minute pauses. While the participants listened, the researchers monitored their breathing, heart rate and blood pressure. The participants had faster heart and breathing rates when they listened to lively music. When the music slowed, their heart and breathing rates did, too. The results were interesting. During the pauses, which were not planned, heart and breathing rates normalized or reached more optimal levels. Whether or not a person liked that style of music did not matter. What this study made clear was that the tempo, or pace, of the music had the greatest effect on the heart.

3 Music can boost the immune function. Scientists explain that a particular type of music can create a positive and profound emotional experience, which leads to the secretion of immune-boosting hormones. This helps contribute to a reduction in the factors responsible for illness. Listening to music or singing can also decrease levels of the stress-related hormone called cortisol. Higher levels of cortisol can lead to a decreased immune response.

4 Music improves intelligence, learning and IQ. The idea that music makes you smarter received considerable attention from scientists and the media. Listening to music or playing an instrument can actually help you learn better, and research confirms this. Music has the power to enhance some kinds of higher brain function and helps to improve reading and literacy skills, spatial-temporal reasoning and mathematical abilities.

5 The way music affects memory is quite intriguing. In another study, it was found that Mozart's music and baroque music, with a 60-beats-per-minute beat pattern, activates the left and the right side of the brain at the same time. This simultaneous action in the left and right parts of the brain maximizes learning and the ability to remember information. Researchers have revealed that certain types of music are a great "key" for recalling memories. Information learned while listening to a particular song can often be remembered simply by "playing" the song “mentally”. Musical training has an even better effect than just listening to music. There is clear evidence that children who take music lessons develop a better memory compared to those who have no musical training.

6 Music improves body movement and coordination as it reduces muscle tension. Therefore, it plays an important role even in developing, maintaining and restoring physical functioning in the rehabilitation of persons with movement disorders.
A. What do the following words from the text refer to?

1. their (para. 2, line 5) refers to ____________________________.
2. this (para. 4, line 3) refers to the fact that ____________________________.
3. those (para. 5, line 8) refers to ____________________________.

B. Find words in the text which mean the following. DO NOT change the form of the words and write ONE WORD ONLY.

1. took part (para. 2) (v) : ____________________________
2. release, production (para. 3) (n) : ____________________________
3. very interesting because of being mysterious (para. 5) (adj) : ____________________________

C. Read the text and answer the questions.

1. When can music be distracting?

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

2. In the study carried out by British and Italian researchers what was the participants’ physical reaction when they listened to slow music?

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

3. What conclusion did the Italian and British researchers reach when they saw the effects of music on the heart?

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

4. What is the positive effect of a simultaneous activity in the left and right parts of the brain?

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

D. 1. Which of the following is TRUE according to the text?
   a) The types of music which were used in the research were chosen according to the participants’ tastes.
   b) Cortisol is a hormone that boosts the immune system and reduces the risk of illness.
   c) The scientists and the media were highly interested in the idea that music makes people more intelligent.
   d) Listening to music and musical training have the same effects on the brain.
Gi

1 What is gi? Gi’s meaning differs from person to person. Some people say that it is a force created by practicing breathing exercises. Some say that it is highly developed concentration. Still others say that it is an electrical force that circulates within the body of all living creatures. Some even claim that gi is a person's soul.

2 Where does the idea of gi come from? Most information about gi comes from Asia and the East. For thousands of years, the people of India have believed in this type of energy, which they call prana. According to Indian mystics, or holy men, highly developed prana can allow a man to have the physical strength of several men, which lets him bend thick metal bars and lift heavy objects. The Chinese call this force chi, the Koreans gi, and the Japanese ki. Regardless of the name, the traditional thinking in Asia is that this energy can be used to improve health, help relaxation and develop self-defense skills.

3 Special gi doctors in China, Korea, and Japan believe that gi travels through our body like cars on a highway. They believe that some types of pain appear because gi is not able to flow smoothly in one’s body, similar to a traffic jam on a road. They use a special system of needle therapy called acupuncture or a type of massage called reiki, to help unblock the areas where gi cannot flow freely. When the areas are unblocked, they become able to direct the gi from their own bodies into the bodies of their patients.

4 Gi meditation, which is popular in China, teaches its followers to send their gi to the muscles of the heart, stomach, face, and neck. These are the places where stress builds up the most. These people believe that learning to direct their gi to these areas will help them to relax and live longer and healthier lives.

5 Probably the most well-known examples of gi development can be found in the area of martial arts. Exercises like hapkido, aikido, and tai chi teach people to develop their gi for self-defense. The Shaolin Monks of Central China, experts of most martial arts, are able to control their gi and do amazing things with their bodies. They are able to bend heavy iron bars with their bare hands, touch their tongues to red-hot swords without injury and endure freezing cold temperatures with no discomfort.

6 Can science prove the existence of gi? With modern computer technology and sensitive recording equipment maybe it can. Researchers from the University of Southern California have been performing experiments to see if there are any actual physical changes in the bodies of people who undertake gi meditation, and they have found interesting results. By attaching special computers that measure brainwaves to the heads of gi meditation students, scientists have been able to detect large increases of electromagnetic waves in their brains. Also, computerized brain scans show that people who do gi exercises use 25% more of their brain area than people who do ordinary meditation. Gi-gong practitioners – people who regularly do the activity – are also able to direct energy to different parts of their body. This energy can be observed on special machines which are used to record the body heat.

7 Is gi meditation helpful? Is gi real? Whether science says it is or not, many people throughout Asia have no doubt about its existence or its health benefits. Maybe the only way to know for sure is to try for yourself!
A. What do the following words from the text refer to?

1. These people (para. 4, line 2) refers to the ___________________ of gi meditation.

2. it (para. 6, line 2) refers to ________________________________.

B. Find words in the text which mean the following. DO NOT change the form of the words and write ONE WORD ONLY.

1. tolerate (para. 5) (v) : _______________________

2. do, practice (para. 6) (v) : _______________________

C. Read the text and answer the questions.

1. According to special gi doctors in China, Korea and Japan, what happens when gi cannot flow smoothly in one’s body?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

2. What is the importance of heart, stomach, face and neck in gi meditation?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

D. Circle the best choice

1. Which of the following is TRUE according to the information in paragraph 6?
   a) Science has proven the existence of gi.
   b) Brain scans have shown that gi practitioners use a bigger part of their brains.
   c) No changes in the brainwaves of gi meditation students have been detected in the experiments.
   d) It was observed that gi practitioners could direct their energy to only one part of their bodies.

E. Complete the paragraph with information from the FIRST TWO paragraphs of the text.

The (1) ____________________ of gi shows a difference among people. Some people think that it is a(n) (2) ____________________ that goes through the bodies of all living things.

The idea of gi originated in (3a) ____________________ and (3b) ____________________. It is called prana (4) ____________________ and according to Indian myths, this highly developed prana lets a man have great physical strength and he can (5a) ____________________ or (5b) ____________________. According to the traditional belief in Asia, gi enables people to (6a) ____________________, to relax and to (6b) ____________________.
LOGICAL SEQUENCE

Circle the choice that best completes the following sentences.

1. Volcanic eruptions are natural events and there isn’t anything we can do to prevent them from happening. On the other hand, ____________.
   a) the last time we saw a devastating volcanic eruption was years ago
   b) there is great damage and many lives are lost as a result of them
   c) there is no point in trying to escape from them
   d) many lives can be saved if we are informed about them in time

2. Despite the well-known disadvantages of living in big cities, ________________.
   a) there are better places to bring up children
   b) there are many people who prefer to live in these crowded places
   c) many people want to move to smaller villages
   d) life in a big city can be very tiring for old people

3. There has been a sharp increase in the number of working women in the recent years. As a result, ________.
   a) many men are strongly in favor of this change
   b) most men are still not doing anything to encourage their wives to work
   c) men have had to share the responsibilities at home more
   d) women have more time to spend with their children at home now

VOCABULARY SECTION

Fill each gap with a suitable word from the box below. DO NOT CHANGE the form of the words. Use each word only ONCE. There are more words than you need.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>breaking</th>
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When people are asked, “What is the main job of the police?” the obvious answer is, “Catching criminals.” This is the part of the job that we see most often on TV and in the newspapers, so it (1)__________________________ to be the most important part. In fact, the first aim of the police is to save lives. In order to (2)__________________________ this aim, all police officers are trained in first aid and other basic medical skills. The second aim of the police is to prevent crime. This is sensible: it is much better to stop someone from (3)__________________________ a murder than to catch a murderer. Modern technology (4)__________________________ the police to stop crimes before they happen: for example, computer analysts can follow the activities of potential criminals, and in this way people can be stopped from (5)__________________________ the law. Do you remember the answer which most people gave to the question I asked earlier? That is the third aim of the police – the (6)__________________________ of crime. They carefully collect clues and evidence which may be very small. For instance, a minute amount of blood will give them genetic information which will help them to (7)__________________________ the criminal.