Learning new skills as an adult can be difficult. We’ve established our habits and routines. Old dogs, new tricks, et cetera. As a child, your day was planned out, and you didn’t have as many responsibilities; you were free to spend time rollerskating, jumping rope, or learning a musical instrument. The latter is one thing many adults wish they’d done in their younger years. Not only is playing an instrument fun and impressive, but it’s also intellectually stimulating.

There’s good news, though: Even if you’ve never beat a drum, strummed a guitar, or tickled the ivories, it’s not too late to start. And there’s an added benefit: Learning to play an instrument as an adult could help sharpen your mind, as well as prevent future cognitive decline. Keep reading to understand the pros of learning an instrument and figure out how you can get started.

**Children and Musical Instruments**

It’s no secret that music lessons benefit children and young adults. They provide kids with structure and teach them patience and responsibility through repeated practice. But did you know that young people who learn instruments gain mental benefits, as well? One study in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* showed that high school students who took music lessons performed better academically than their non-musical peers. Research from the *American Psychological Association* suggests that those who learned an instrument as a child stay sharper mentally, even decades after they stop playing their instrument. And a recent study in *Frontiers in Psychology* proved that learning a musical instrument boosted adolescents’ mental health and well-being.