



From Play to Purpose: Cardio Drumming Across the Lifespan

Lacy Yeley, MS

University of Tennessee Extension
Family & Consumer Sciences

**What if one of the most effective
physical activity programs required
no gym membership,
no athletic skill,
and created instant community?**

Why This Matters



Physical inactivity remains high

1 in 4 adults meet exercise guidelines



Chronic disease rising

75%+ US adults have a chronic condition



Social isolation increasing

Across age groups



Barriers: cost, intimidation, access

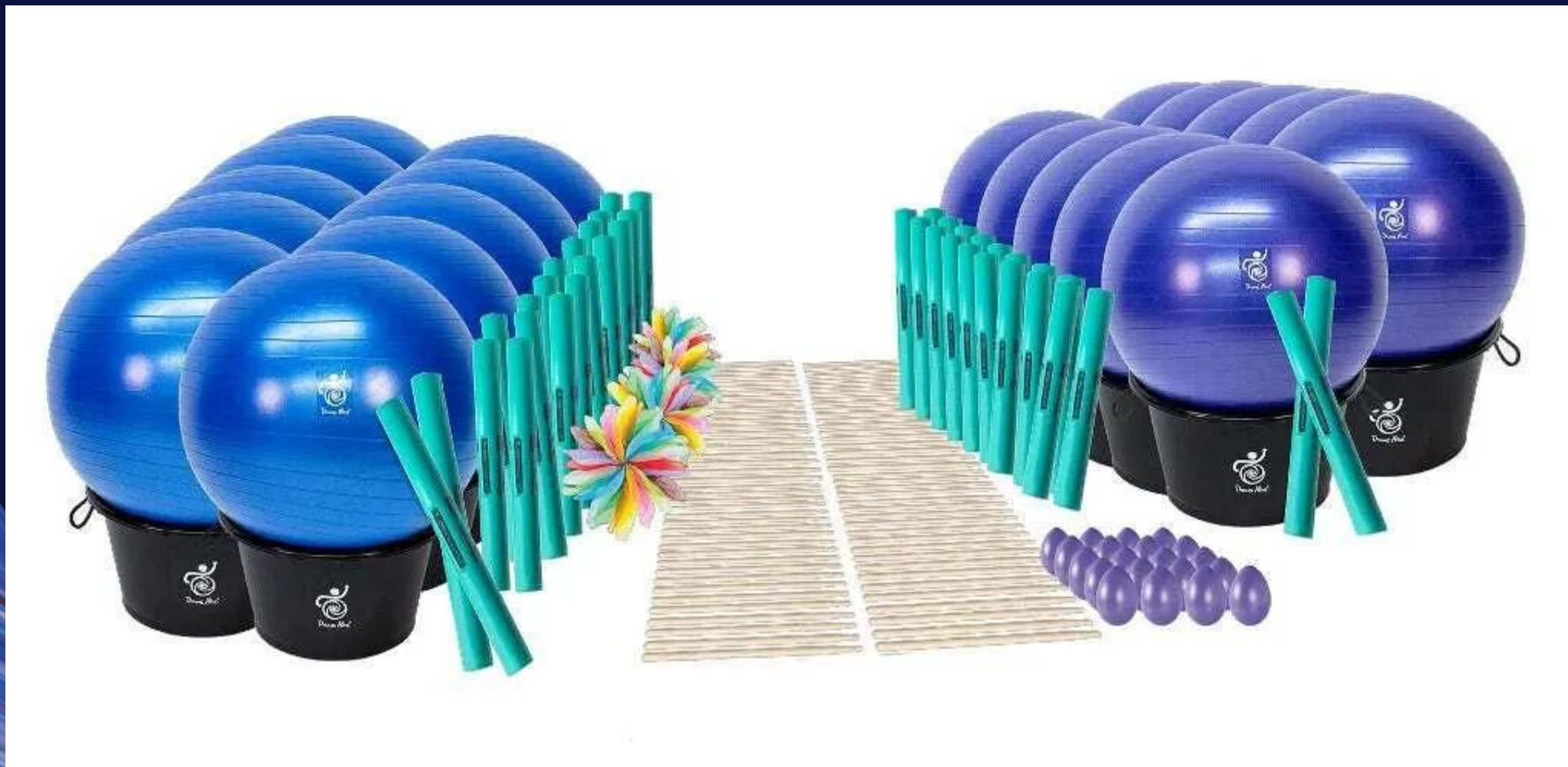
What would happen if physical activity programs were:

- Low cost
- Scalable
- Socially engaging
- Adaptable across the lifespan
- Implementable within existing systems



What is Cardio Drumming?

- Stability ball + bucket + drumsticks
- Music-driven interval movement
- Seated or standing options
- Modifiable intensity
- Group-based format



Why it works:

- Aerobic activity + music + group format
- Reduces perceived exertion
- Improves coordination & focus
- Increases adherence
- Builds social cohesion

Whole-Person Benefits

Physical	Cognitive
Emotional	Social

Across the Lifespan

Youth Engagement

- After-school programs
- School wellness initiatives
- 4-H & youth development
- Builds coordination & confidence
- Engages non-athletic youth



Adult Engagement

- Workplace wellness
- Community classes
- SNAP-Ed integration
- Stress reduction
- Entry point for inactive adults



Older Adult Engagement

- Senior centers & congregate meal sites
- Seated modifications
- Balance & mobility support
- Cognitive engagement
- Reduces isolation



Accessible by Design

- Low infrastructure cost (\$30–50 per station)
- Minimal storage
- No literacy requirement
- Adaptable music selection
- Inclusive of varying physical ability

Implementation Framework

1. Start where people are
2. Partner for sustainability
3. Pilot → Evaluate → Scale

Safety First

- Warm-up & cool-down required
- Intensity modifications
- Seated options available
- Clear cueing & posture guidance
- Liability coverage considerations

Measuring Impact

- Attendance tracking
- Participant satisfaction surveys
- Self-reported activity increases
- Observed improvements in engagement
- Retention rates

"I didn't think I could still do something like this – now I look forward to it every week."

"This is the first program that made me want to keep moving."

"You don't have to be good at sports to be good at this."

"This is the most fun I've ever had exercising."

Where this fits in Public Health Strategy

Aligns With:

- Chronic disease prevention
- Healthy aging initiatives
- Workplace wellness
- Social isolation mitigation
- Community health improvement plans

Lessons from Implementation

- Keep choreography simple
- Emphasize fun & community
- Train instructors thoroughly
- Identify site champions
- Communicate safety clearly

Instructor Development

- National certification available (Drums Alive®)
- ACE/NASM continuing education credits
- Train-the-trainer options
- Can integrate into existing workforce models

From Play to Purpose

**Movement does not have to be
complicated to be effective.**

**When we combine rhythm, accessibility,
and community — participation follows.**

Lacy Yeley

lyeley@utk.edu