

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND THE DEVELOPING BRAIN

FIT BODY, FIT MIND

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BENEFITS THE BRAIN.

The health benefits of physical activity are well known, but recent research has found that physical activity also appears to help with a young person's brain development. Physical activity can lead to more efficiently organized, robust, and flexible brain networks. The more physical activity, the more "fit" the brain. Activity improves how the brain functions and how easily it can adapt to changes in the environment.

TYPES OF ACTIVITY THAT BENEFIT THE BRAIN

Cardio: Walking, running, dancing, skipping, and jumping

Fundamental movement: Hopping on one foot, spinning around, and balancing

Perceptual motor development: Movements related to time (e.g., moving fast vs. slow), direction (moving forward, back, or to the side), and spatial awareness (e.g., crossing their arm from the right side of the body)

WHAT'S THE CONNECTION?

Physical activity gives the brain the chance to develop skills such as planning and decision-making about movement. Also, it promotes greater overall health and wellness, which is what the brain needs. What is good for the body is good for the brain.





**60 MINUTES
OF ACTIVITY
HAS A
WIDESPREAD
POSITIVE
EFFECT**

EXERCISE WORKS!

- Improved attention
- Faster sensory and motor processing
- Boosted Memory
- Good decision-making
- Better planning and coordinating
- Help controlling actions and behaviors

BUILDING A STRONGER BRAIN

The strongest effects occur when a young person is active multiple times per week. Young people who engaged in high levels of physical activity showed beneficial effects on brain circuits in multiple areas that are essential to learning and reasoning. Increasing the diversity of physical activity increases the benefit.

**EXERCISE: THE SMART CHOICE
FOR BRAIN HEALTH.**