

Scientists Say Exercise Is “Food for the Brain”



Do you think that walking and running might help you with reading and writing? Scientists say it can. They say exercise causes blood to flow to the brain. That carries oxygen and nutrients to the brain.

“Exercise is food for the brain,” says Dr. John Ratey of Harvard University. Studies show that exercise builds new brain cells in the part of the brain that helps with memory and learning, he added.

Short bursts of exercise throughout the day may help students pay attention more, behave better, and feel better about themselves, Dr. Dawn Coe told *News For You*. “That can help students do better in school,” she added.

One group of scientists say they have proof that exercise can help boost students’ grades. The scientists studied 214 sixth graders. They divided the students into three groups that got different amounts of exercise. They learned that the group that exercised most did the best on tests. The more active the exercise, the better, the scientists said. Basketball, soccer, and swimming are some of the best forms of exercise. Others are biking, skateboarding, playing tag, and jumping on a trampoline.

NEWS WORD BOX

oxygen nutrients
cells attention divide
concentrate

Some sports -- such as basketball and tennis -- are good because players must concentrate to play well. Playing those sports can help *teach* students to concentrate. That’s a skill that can help students in the classroom too.

MORE FACTS ABOUT EXERCISE AND THE BRAIN

- Fewer than one in four students gets at least 30 minutes of daily exercise.
- School-age kids and teens spend an average of 4.8 hours per day on the computer, watching TV, or playing video games.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

What do you think Dr. John Ratey meant when he said “Exercise is food for the brain”? Do you think that’s a good comparison? Why or why not?