

Physical fitness strengthens your brain health

What is the real reason you are doing – or believe you should do – sports?

Is it physical attractiveness, preventive health, stress management? No matter what your current motivation is, one major reason should be added to your list: to stay mentally fit.

Finding: High fitness level = High brain activity

How exactly physical training supports mental fitness was shown in a recent study by researchers of the Boston University School of Medicine. Altogether 26 older (aged 55-74 years) and 31 younger (aged 18-31 years) adults attended the study.

First, physical fitness was assessed, then the participants underwent MRI-scanning while they had to perform learning and memory tasks. By analyzing the brain images from MRI-scanning the researchers could assess the brain functions of the participants during the performance of the cognitive tasks.

The authors made interesting findings. The older adults had more difficulties in the learning and memory tasks than the younger adults, and also their brain activity pattern was different from that of the younger adults.

However, these effects were modified by the older adults' physical fitness level: older adults with a high fitness level performed significantly better in the learning and memory tasks than older adults with a low fitness level. Interestingly, the high fit older adults showed increased brain activity in brain regions that are affected by age-related decline. This finding suggests that physical fitness can provide a compensatory mechanism for maintaining cognitive performance even though the brain is aging.

Train your body and your brain – a virtuous cycle for a healthy life

These new findings highlight the importance of physical fitness to our general well-being. The effects of good physical fitness become even clearer at older age. Cardiorespiratory fitness can be improved with simple exercises like walking or jogging. By increasing fitness you're investing not only on your physical well-being but also on enhanced cognitive functioning.

Start your NeuroNation brain training now and do your first step towards a healthy and flexible mind.