

Walking This Much Every Day Could Reduce Your Dementia Risk

Researchers from Oregon Health & Science University found a short workout could have a significant impact on one's learning and memory.

Lauren Wicks on 5 July 2019 in CookingLight.com

We could all use more exercise in our lives, as only 23% of Americans get enough on a regular basis. Regular exercise offers some serious health benefits, from helping us lose weight to reducing our risk of developing chronic disease. But new research shows it could also play a crucial role in protecting our brains from dementia.

Researchers from Oregon Health & Science University wanted to discover how exercise can actually benefit the brain—besides releasing endorphins and boosting our moods. Previous studies have linked exercise to better brain health, but it's hard to separate the physical benefits from the specific effects on the brain.

The scientists designed a study where mice completed single, short bursts of exercise—the human equivalent to walking 4,000 steps—and their brain activity was monitored for three days post-exercise. The researchers discovered just a short workout increased activity in the hippocampus, the region of the brain responsible for learning and memory. The hippocampus is responsible for forming, organizing and storing our memories. The hippocampus is responsible for forming, organizing and storing our memories, and plays a major role in cognitive decline and Alzheimer's Disease.

Interested in learning more about the benefits of exercise?

[Exercising Might Help You Make Healthier Food Choices, Study Says](#)

[Replacing 30 Minutes of Sitting With Exercise Can Reduce Death Risk By 45 Percent, Study Says](#)
[Here's How Much You Need to Exercise to Make Up for a Day of Sitting](#)

"Exercise is cheap, and you don't necessarily need a fancy gym membership or have to run 10 miles a day," said co-senior author Gary Westbrook, M.D., in a press release.

The team plans to continue their research by pairing short bouts of exercise with learning tasks to better understand the impact of physical activity on learning and memory.

The Bottom Line

While more research needs to be conducted, this study could be a great insight into effectively preventing Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive-related disorders in the future. There are a million reasons to exercise, and we will continue to monitor this research to see if preventing dementia and Alzheimer's becomes yet another important reason to get moving.