

[IMAGE]

## Train Your Brain to Crave the Right Foods

By Editorial Staff

You can train your brain to do just about anything – recall long strings of numbers or countless steps to complete a task; even when to fall asleep and wake up. But what about training your brain to crave healthy foods? According to a recent study published in *Nutrition & Diabetes*, your brain indeed possesses the capacity to "learn" what it should be encouraging you to eat.

In the study, researchers divided 13 overweight / obese subjects into two groups for comparison. Eight of the subjects received behavioral training that included portion-controlled menus; advice on healthy eating (at home and at restaurants); support-group sessions; a special diet that focused on more fiber and protein, and lower daily caloric intake (500-1,000 less calories a day); and tips to control hunger without overeating / indulging.

The researchers performed MRI scans before the intervention and six months later as study participants viewed various photos of foods. Scans suggested that following the weight-loss intervention, people were less likely to respond to images of high-calorie, high-fat foods than before. Specifically, researchers saw less brain activity in the "pleasure center" of the brain in response to these foods, and more activity in response to the lower-calorie foods.

train your brain - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Widely quoted in the media following the study's release, co-author Dr. Sai Krupa Das commented: "Our study shows those who participated in [the diet] had an increased desire for healthier foods along with a decreased preference for unhealthy foods, the combined effects of which are probably critical for sustainable weight control."

While these findings are preliminary and more research definitely needs to be done, they're encouraging considering what we know about the brain. Training the brain to crave the right foods might be the most effective, lasting way to beat obesity and the constellation of health conditions that accompany it. Talk to your doctor to learn more.

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