

[IMAGE]

What Exercise Does to Your Brain

By Editorial Staff

We know exercise is good for the brain; abundant research links consistent physical activity to reduced rates of cognitive decline with aging. And just last issue, we presented study findings suggesting exercise benefits your brain by reducing chronic anxiety. But *why* is exercise so good for the brain, particularly when we're older? New research gives us an answer.

A team of investigators found that higher levels of late-life physical activity correlate with higher levels of synaptic proteins that promote information exchange among brain neurons. According to the researchers, writing on their findings in *Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association*, this is significant because while physical activity has been shown to benefit cognition in mice trials, the association has proven to be more challenging in human studies. (In fact, they claim this is the first such study to verify an association between physical activity and markers of synaptic integrity in human brain tissue.)

brain cell - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark If you're thinking late-age physical activity is all you need to worry about, so you can sit on the couch year after year until then, the researchers offer this important observation as well: "We suggest PA may help build synaptic health, even at late ages ... but this is a potentially plastic process that may need to be sustained over time." In other words, lifetime physical activity is likely also a key factor in, well, lifelong brain health. For more information on brain health and how to minimize your risk of cognitive decline, [click here](#).

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