

Can you really exercise your brain?

Who wouldn't want a better memory? After all, our recollections are fragile and can be impaired by diseases, injuries, mental health conditions and, most acutely for all of us, aging.

A multibillion-dollar industry for brain training already capitalizes on this perceived need by providing an abundance of apps for phones and tablets that provide mental challenges that are easily accessible and relatively inexpensive.

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If brain training works, the field holds enormous promise to help people with cognitive impairments, and to aid individuals who are recovering from cancer or [perhaps even COVID-19](#). Some affirmation of the potential for cognitive training could be seen in the [FDA's recent approval of a brain training game](#) to treat ADHD.

Critics, however argue that while the concept is appealing, the overall evidence does not suffice to demonstrate that core brain processes can be truly improved... Furthermore, most apps available to consumers have not undergone scientific validation at all.

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Although the jury is still out, there is evidence that short-term working memory training can provide benefits to relatively high functioning individuals, such as college students. For vision training, there are [suggestions that even elite athletes can benefit](#). Still, whether one has a memory impairment or not, it is likely that, similar to diet or exercise, brain training does not benefit everyone in the same way.

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