

## Scans of 10,000 brains show dramatic memory benefits from just 4 minutes of daily exercise

A [new study](#), which involved scanning the brains of more than 10,000 healthy men and women from ages 18 to 97, found that those who walked, swam, cycled or otherwise worked out moderately for 25 minutes a week had bigger brains than those who didn't, whatever their ages.

Bigger brains typically mean healthier brains.

The differences were most pronounced in parts of the brain involved with thinking and memory, which often shrink as we age, contributing to risks for cognitive decline and dementia.

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Exactly how exercise might be altering brains is impossible to say from this study. But [researcher Cyrus. A] Raji and his colleagues believe exercise reduces inflammation in the brain and also encourages the release of various neurochemicals that promote the creation of new brain cells and blood vessels.

In effect, exercise seems to help build and bank a “structural brain reserve,” he said, a buffer of extra cells and matter that could protect us somewhat from the otherwise inevitable decline in brain size and function that occurs as we age. Our brains may still shrink and sputter over the years. But, if we exercise, this slow fall starts from a higher baseline.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the full article here\*\*](#)