

Reading: The Workout for Your Brain

There is not a single person who can say they haven't been encouraged to read. Perhaps some of us enjoyed it more than others – that's a given – but we have all gone through the pages of at least one book, and visualised the story unfolding. There is now evidence that reading, or the visual exercise that reading entails, is great for the brain.

The stimulation of reading exercises the occipital lobe of the brain which processes visual information. Reading exercises and improves this part of the brain, making it easier for literate readers to process and understand visual information. Not only that but it improves your imagination, helps with creativity and lets you make better decisions. Therefore, if you read, you'll be able to revise better, empathise more with your friends and favourite TV shows, and you'll be able to be in control your life.

Reading also activates the parietal lobe in your brain. This is the section that pieces together words and creates your thoughts. Developed readers have an enhanced parietal lobe, meaning they have improved reading skills and can think clearly. The parietal lobe also works alongside the temporal lobe, meaning reading improves your memory.

In 2012, a neuroscientist called Stanislas Dehaene produced a study looking at the benefits of reading upon the brain. He studied sixty-three adults with reading abilities ranging from experienced to non-existent. He used magnetic response imaging to monitor brain functional while they performed tasks. Those who were talented readers outshone all others while performing a multitude of tasks using oral information, written information and visual information. Their brains were found to be

developed, enhanced and stimulated, unlike the non-readers.



The study also revealed that those who are slow readers while in their late childhood are more likely to get divorced and become unemployed. This is because slow readers have difficulty processing information and will have child-like communication skills. On top of this, those who cannot read to a sufficient level will often be slow in other academic subjects.

Reading is one of the best forms of mental stimulation as it affects so much of the brain. Mental stimulation is vital as it creates new neurons, thoroughly improving your brain. But reading isn't only beneficial to school-aged children – a person of any age can develop new neurons and improve their brain's ability.

So, if the usual pleas from your parents to read just aren't helping, or the glowing recommendations from avid readers aren't enticing, try this: reading can make you smarter, more creative, and improve your payroll. In short; to improve your life, sit down, pick up a book, and start giving your brain a workout.

-Felicity