

To work your brain, work your body

March 13 2009, By Julie Deardorff

The problem: I lost my car keys. What kind of training will make my brain work better?

The solution: Brain-boosting software programs are a booming business. And studies show that both computer exercises and old-fashioned mental activities - reading or crafting - can affect memory.

But the best thing you can do for your [brain](#) is to move your body.

"If I had to pick between [fitness training](#) and [brain training](#), I'd go with fitness," said Sam Wang, an associate professor of [neuroscience](#) and molecular biology at Princeton University. So far, he said, [exercise](#) has been shown to have an effect several times larger than computer-brain exercise.

But Wang noted that "fitness training only lasts as long as the benefit to your [cardiovascular system](#)." Brain exercise, on the other hand, "might last longer."

Why not combine mental and [physical fitness](#)? That's the idea behind Brain Center America's NeuroActive Bike, which allows people to select from 22 brain-stimulating exercises while they pedal.

Wang said he would never shell out \$3,995 for the bike, which is available in the U.S. only in South Florida, but it could be a double workout for the brain.

What he would really like to see is a computer that works only if he's moving on an exercise bike or treadmill.

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