

Can you boost your brain power through video?

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Watching video of simple tasks before carrying them out may boost the brain's structure, or plasticity, and increase motor skills, according to a study released today that will be presented at the American Academy of Neurology's 66th Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, April 26 to May 3, 2014. Brain plasticity is the brain's ability to flex and adapt, allowing for better learning. The brain loses plasticity as it ages.

For the study, 36 right-handed healthy adults participated in 40-minute training sessions five times a week for two weeks. Half the group watched videos of a specific task, such as writing with a pen, cutting with scissors or handling coins, then were asked to complete the task themselves. The other half watched videos of landscapes and then were asked to complete the same tasks.

At the start of the study and again two weeks later, the groups were tested for strength and hand skills, and also underwent 3-D MRI brain scans. Scientists looked at brain volume changes in both groups.

The study found that the group who completed the training along with watching the activity videos had 11 times greater improvement of motor skill abilities, mainly in terms of strength, compared to those who watched the landscape videos.

"Our study lends credence to the idea that even as an adult, your [brain](#) is able to better learn skills just by watching the activity take place. With a dramatic increase of videos available through mobile phones, computers,

and other newer technology, this topic should be the focus of more research," said study author Paolo Preziosa, MD, with San Raffaele Hospital in Milan, Italy. "The results might also contribute to reducing disability and improving quality of those who are impaired or who are undergoing physical rehabilitation."

Provided by American Academy of Neurology

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