

Taking some time off can help when learning a new language

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When learning a new language, it doesn't hurt to take a break, according to surprising new research published Mar. 28 in the open access journal *PLoS ONE*.

Adult subjects who had been taught to speak and comprehend an artificial language to high proficiency and then went several months without any further exposure did not show any change in their [language abilities](#) after the time off, report the authors, led by Michael Ullman of Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. and Kara Morgan-Short of the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The time away from the language even seemed to help the subjects process the artificial language more "naturally": after the delay, the way the subjects processed the artificial language's [syntax](#) in the brain was more similar to processing a first language than it was immediately after they learned the new language.

More information: Morgan-Short K, Finger I, Grey S, Ullman MT (2012) Second Language Processing Shows Increased Native-Like Neural Responses after Months of No Exposure. *PLoS ONE* 7(3): e32974.

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