

Recommended Physical Activity to Improve Academic Skills and Executive Functioning



Summer is a great time for outdoor sports. As you may already know, physical activity is good for the body and the mind. Physical activity to improve academic skills is also a great summer option. In addition, physical exercise that challenges your body through exertion and complex body movements can improve attention and learning.

If you are lucky enough to live near the ocean or will be taking a beach vacation this year, one water sport that fits all of John Ratey's [\(author of Spark\)](#) criteria for improving focus and attention is surfing. If you and your child are not into surfing, you could try something similar such as skim boarding, boogie boarding, or body surfing. The key factor in Ratey's research is combining exercise with complex body movement, balance, or timing. All of these sports require these skills in excess. Even if you don't become an expert in any of these areas, this type of exercise for your body translates into great exercise for your brain.

Rhode Islanders have the ocean at their fingertips and can not only smell the ocean air but also use the water for relaxation and health. But the ocean also offers the chance to exercise in many ways that can enhance your brain and improve executive functioning. So get out and surf, body surf, or boogie board!