

Your Brain on Games

There are many ways to build your brain. Some people suggest physical exercise is a tool for that. Others would have you read for hours at a time, or attend school nonstop, but believe it or not, you might build your brain while playing video games.

What happens to your brain on games? Playing video games can actually change the size and structure of your brain. Just like [taxi drivers in England](#) who have a larger hippocampus because of the need to memorize the 25,000 streets within London, playing video games, [such as Tetris](#), increases the cortical thickness of player's brains.

Did you know that playing memory games increases your brain activity in the prefrontal cortex, the most advanced part of your brain? Studies show that playing selected games can change your brain in a positive way. But don't play the same games time and time again.

You are may be too young to remember Popeye but you've probably seen pictures of him. It looked like the only thing he ever worked out when he went to the gym (or ate his spinach) were his forearms, while the rest of him looked rather weak. This is what will happen if all you do is play video games instead of exercising all parts of your brain with a variety of activities.

Luckily, there are a lot of ways that you can exercise your brain. Video game play is one method of brain training, and is a perfectly good way to improve your brain capacity. But it is important to play a variety of games, make sure you have lots of time to exercise your body, and participate in other social and educational activities.

Here are some other ways to exercise other parts of your brain:

- Be creative. This doesn't mean that you have to be an artist. You can build a fort in the woods, cook new recipes for your family, or find interesting ways to dress for school.
- Try new things. Even something as simple as asking your parents to drive home from school a different way gives you a chance to look at things differently. Try out a totally new sport as a method to challenge your brain.
- Learn, study, and read. Become an expert on something that you're really interested in. It can be anything from skateboarding, Star Wars movies, your favorite singer, or texting your friends. If it's texting, find out everything you can about how it was invented and how you might use it to help you get your schoolwork done.