

Have You Helped Your Heart Today Exercise for Heart and Mind

Have you ever had a really bright idea while exercising? Dr. Scott Small a neurologist at Columbia University Medical Center in New York says that's no surprise.

Exercise builds brainpower by creating new brain cells in a region of the brain linked to memory and memory loss called the dentate gyrus.

Using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) the researchers found that mice that exercised grew new brain cells in the part of the brain that is affected in age-related memory decline which begins around age 30 for most humans.

The MRI tested cerebral blood volume in mice before and after exercise. Once the findings were established in mice, the researchers used the same procedure with human subjects and found the same patterns. In addition to MRI's done before and after exercise, they also measured the fitness of each subject by measuring oxygen volume before and after a three month aerobic exercise program.

Exercise generated more blood flow to the dentate gyrus, the more fit a person got, the more blood flow the MRI detected. It seems we get smarter by getting healthier!

The researchers will now try to identify the most beneficial exercise regimen for improved cognition and reduced memory loss.

For more information contact Healthy Heart Program at the Columbia County Department of Health. 828-3358 ext 1314